# DUBARKI







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MADAME DU BARRY From a miniature by R. Cosway

MEMOIRS OF THE FAVOURITE
OF LOUIS XV. EDITED BY
HELEN KENDRICK HAYES

DANA ESTES & COMPANY
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# INTRODUCTION

N placing before he public the "Memoirs" of a celebrated courtesan, it is perhaps advisable to preface this little work by a brief apologia. The editor is sensible of the fact that the name of du Barry is invariably associated with a phase of life which it is customary to discuss sotto voce, with a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders, and the utterance of certain favourite platitudes regarding "that unfortunate temperament."

But the study of such a temperament is often a revelation, and a perusal of this short volume will perhaps enable the reader to judge more charitably the woman whose weaknesses, after all, were the almost inevitable outcome of circumstances and environment, and whose character was redeemed by many admirable and endearing qualities.

We will endeavour to follow her career through all its varying phases to its tragic end; as the poor little milliner, surrounded by the manifold temptations peculiar to her

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class; as the Comtesse du Barry and Royal Favourite—the instrument of ambitious political intriguers, and as the woman fallen from her high estate, facing the horror of the guillotine.

The word "instrument" has just been used—advisedly. Reader, when you review the story of her life, when you compare, perhaps, her agony of fear on mounting the scaffold with the calm heroism of the women of honoured memory who perished thus, remember that they had the support of passionately-cherished convictions to lend them courage. Remember that poor du Barry was inspired by no enthusiastic love of country; she was only a docile, conciliatory, pleasure-loving woman, whose all-absorbing interests lay in the boudoir, and not in the Council Chamber.

If, on occasion, her head was easily turned by the homage paid to her exquisite beauty, she nevertheless knew how to maintain a simple, unaffected dignity; if she loved luxury and ease, she was none the less generous and kind-hearted, and, even in one of the books of the Revolution ("La Galérie des dames Françoises pour servir de suite à la Galérie des états généraux") it is admitted

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# INTRODUCTION

of her that "she did not even humiliate those whom she might have destroyed."

Utterly indifferent at heart to political issues and affairs of State, she was merely the carefully-instructed tool of the Comte Jean du Barry, Richelieu, d'Aiguillon and Maupeon, who saw in her the means to an end—their own personal advancement and the downfall of the powerful "de Choiseul" party.

And, reader, remembering these things,

"Be to her faults a little blind, Be to her virtues very kind."



# CHAPTER I

HER BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

TERY little is known of the actual origin of the Comtesse du Barry. Her early life is shrouded in fable and mystery, and one can only accept the most popular theory extant as to her parentage. It would seem that, during the war of 1774, M. Billard Dumouceau, a wealthy financier, was obliged to pass through the small town of Vaucouleurs, in Champagne, which prides itself equally on the fact that it is the birthplace of the sainted Pucelle, and on its ability to chronicle that it was at Vaucouleurs the famous du Barry first saw the light of day.

During his short stay there, Dumouceau lodged at the house of a certain collector of excise, named Gomart de Vaubernier, and, at the earnest request of the latter's wife, good-naturedly consented to act as godfather

to her baby daughter. Thanks to the generosity of the obliging financier, the christening was quite a magnificent affair. In accordance with the prevailing custom of the day, a grand fête was held, and a handsome present made to the father of the newborn babe by the open-handed Dumouceau. Although her godfather took his departure almost immediately, Providence had decreed that he was not to pass out of the life of the little Marie-Jeanne for ever.

Many years after his return to Paris, a woman was one morning ushered into his reception-room, a grief-stricken creature, accompanied by a little child. He failed to recognise either of his visitors, until the woman, in a voice broken by sobs, recalled to his mind the rôle he had enacted so long ago in Vaucouleurs. Dumouceau listened to her narrative in evident surprise, gazing the while at his little goddaughter, now blossoming into lovely girlhood. Finally, he took the child into his arms, embracing her fondly, and bade the mother continue her story.

It appeared that her husband had died, leaving his widow in the direst poverty. Her small savings had speedily vanished, and she had journeyed to Paris in the hope of finding some employment that would enable her to provide at least the necessaries of life

# HER BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

for herself and her beautiful child. What would have been the mother's feelings at this time, could she have gazed down the long vista of years and beheld her now half-starved daughter surrounded by all the opulence that a rich and dissolute French court could offer!

The interview resulted in Dumouceau presenting the widow Gomart with sufficient money for her immediate needs, arranging, at the same time, that funds should be sent to her regularly for the proper maintenance of Marie-Jeanne, and for her instruction in the rudiments of reading and writing. Judging, however, from certain of her letters, and other written evidence, Madame du Barry's mother could not have devoted very much of the money provided for that purpose to her child's education.

Dumouceau's next step was to place the pair under the protection of his mistress, Mlle Frédérique, which somewhat curious move would seem to have been inspired by a double motive—the really good-hearted and sincere desire to do his best for mother and daughter in regard to their material welfare, and the less praiseworthy object of securing, in the person of the former, a capable spy upon the actions of the Frédérique, whose fidelity he suspected with all the jealousy born of passionate love.

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Meanwhile, Marie-Jeanne was growing in beauty, and becoming unnaturally precocious for one of her tender years. Mlle Frédérique, therefore, being a woman of intelligence, began to nourish fears for the future, so that when a pious relative of Dumouceau's urged upon him the necessity for removing the young girl from this corrupt atmosphere to the peaceful and more befitting surroundings of convent life, she joyfully seconded the proposal. In due course, therefore, it was decided that little Jeanne should be entrusted to the care of the good sisters of Saint-Aure. The necessary arrangements were completed, and the doors of the convent in the Rue Neuve Saint Généviève closed upon her.

It is easy to imagine that this change was by no means appreciated by the child, whose eyes had long been dazzled by all the magnificence of a wealthy courtesan's establishment. The luxury-loving little girl had to say goodbye to the exquisite little garments modelled from the discarded creations of the Frédérique—good-bye to the petting and caressing which the young coquette had already begun to demand as her right. And, instead of these things, a simple dress of white Aumale serge; a nun-like band of coarse white linen concealing the golden tresses; two plain, clumsy shoes of yellow calf for the dainty feet, and

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surroundings as utterly gloomy as her new

attire was quiet and unassuming.

Work! work! work! and constant, depressing silence, were the order of the day. But little Jeanne, to judge from the frequent complaints of her conduct received by her godfather, speedily proceeded to demonstrate that vain were all the convent rules as far as she was concerned. Her character was soon revealed; her light-hearted gaiety and the hubbub she constantly created in their quiet retreat gave birth to many anxious fears in the breast of each gentle sister. The following letter, written by Jeanne to her godfather, throws a sidelight on her convent life:—

# To Monsieur Billard Dumouceau

Convent of St-Aure, June 10th, 1758

Dearest Godfather and Sir,—I write you these lines to do myself the honour of inquiring after your health, and at the same time to inform you that what you have heard concerning me (if you will pardon me, Sir), is entirely false. The governess has told you that I read bad books, and that I make the other boarders read them. It is no such thing; it was Mlle Reville who had them from her cousin, and showed them to us; but I would not read them, for I said it was not pretty to read such books. At last I did read them, because all my companions had done so, and insisted upon my doing the same. This, my dear godfather, is the whole truth of the matter.

As to the bad picture that was found torn to pieces, I can assure you I did not tear it, nor can I tell

you which of the boarders did.

"I pray to the Lord to preserve your health and life, and beg to see you when you can come here. I look upon you as my father, and love you as much."

Reading between the lines, it is not difficult to understand that, at last, the dread occasioned by the thought of her influence upon her more amenable companions brought about her dismissal. She was sent home to her mother again, and, incidentally, of course, to the Frédérique.

But this lady was determined to brook no rival, and being, moreover, heartily tired of the mother's spying into her private affairs, decided upon a plan by means of which she felt sure she would be able to banish from her establishment both mother

and daughter.

Assuming an attitude of outraged virtue, she treated her master to a lengthy recital of the misdeeds of Madame Gomart de Vaubernier, whom, she stated, was on terms of singular familiarity with a certain Franciscan monk. Again the influential mistress obtained her heart's desire and the two she so heartily detested were turned out into the streets.

Jeanne was about fifteen years of age at

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this time, and being without money, without resources of any description, she became a sort of little girl-pedlar, going from door to door with a wooden tray of cheap imitation jewellery and other useless odds and ends which are purchased on the charitable impulse of the moment, out of pity for the forlorn little saleswoman with the mutely-eloquent appeal in her pretty eyes. At length, however, her mother was fortunate enough to obtain a post as cook in the household of a wealthy lady who spent much of her time in the country, and, being very fond of children, she was not at all averse to her cook having her beautiful little daughter to stay with her. Madame numbered many eminent men among her acquaintances, and it is recorded that the little Manon (as she came to be called in Madame's establishment), charmed the hearts of all, and particularly of M. L'Abbé d'Usson de Bonac, and Field-Marshal M. de Marcieu, who loaded the young girl with presents. Already the child began to display a decided liking for the society of the other sex!

# CHAPTER II

#### THE LITTLE MILLINER

BOUT the year 1760, Madame Gomart who, it is to be feared, had every intention of making the most of her daughter's exceptional beauty, and hoped thereby to add considerably to her financial resources, placed "Manon" in the millinery establishment of M. Labille, in the Rue St Honoré, under the name of Mlle

Lançon.

A pitiful similarity characterises the lives of most milliners' "young ladies" in that eighteenth century. Day by day their eyes were dazzled by gorgeous finery and other evidences of the ample wealth of their master's clients; day by day they had to face temptation in its most alluring form. Imagine innumerable brilliantly-lighted windows, around which cluster ogling, wealthy Parisian dandies, eagerly awaiting the opportunity of addressing a bright-eyed little milliner as she trips daintily out of the shop, bent on some out-door errand for her master. Imagine the seductively-worded notes, the costly

# THE LITTLE MILLINER

presents; and it is easy to understand why, sooner or later, some rich young idler or other entered into the lives of these poor little milliners, who obtained only the merest pittance for their long hours of monotonous toil. Needless to say, the gay little Manon Lançon went the way of the rest.

It is even asserted that while with M. Labille she fell into the clutches of a famous procuress, but there is no necessity to endeavour to discover the precise depths of frailty to which she descended. Suffice it to say that, whatever her experiences, she remained heart-whole enough to be exceedingly fastidious and fickle to the last degree.

Although she flung herself eagerly into the abyss of pleasure, almost hurled thither by that overwhelming temperamental forcethat form of feminine desire which cries aloud for the admiration of men-her craving for this form of excitement was tempered by a certain level-headed caution which restrained her from throwing herself away on any amorous youth who happened to appeal to her tastes. The following story is illustrative of this somewhat unusual combination of passionate ardour and cool, calculating prudence.

A certain young M. Duval, a typical, good-looking, elegantly-dressed *Parisien*, a clerk in the Navy Office, occupied a small

bachelor apartment on the fourth floor of the same building in which was situated the Labille establishment. One evening, as he was entering his room, he was surprised to find, pinned on to his door, a crudely-executed portrait of himself. The discovery was immensely flattering to his vanity, for he immediately concluded it was the work of one of Mme Labille's fair assistants—some ingenuous young creature who had fallen in love with him and, too shy to address him openly, had resorted to this

means of declaring her passion!

There was no sleep for the young man that night. Anticipation of delights to come fired his blood, and eager curiosity kept him awake until the small hours of the morning, when he fell into a restless slumber. Suddenly a slight sound aroused him. As it seemed to come from the direction of his door, he stooped down to look through the keyhole, and dimly perceived a young girl busily engaged in drawing another portrait. Throwing open the door to confront her, he surprised the young artist at her task, and for a moment she stood irresolute, but instantly recovering her self-possession, gave a mocking little laugh, and nimbly took to her heels.

Duval now remembered that Mme Labille gave lessons in drawing to those of

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her assistants who displayed any talent in that direction, so that he no longer entertained any doubt as to the identity of his clandestine visitor. He took the second portrait into his room, gazed at it for a while as if seeking inspiration from the rough design, and then decided on the step he would take to bring matters to a climax.

Very early the next morning he pinned the portrait on the door again. Beneath it were inscribed the following words—"I fain would know who drew this picture!" On his return in the evening he strode eagerly to his room, and found to his delight that his plan had succeeded for, covering his own portrait, was another; a very rough sketch, it is true, but revealing, nevertheless, some of the charm of a face of exquisite beauty.

The rest was comparatively easy, and he made up his mind then and there to search the millinery showrooms for the living counterpart of the portrait on the door. Carefully making a tour of the Labille establishment, he studied minutely the face of each girl, until at last his patience was rewarded. Glancing a second time at the face of the beautiful Manon, he felt he had discovered the object of his search, and his suspicions were confirmed as he observed a

wicked little smile slowly dawning round the corners of her lovely mouth! Long he gazed at her, drinking in every detail of her marvellous beauty. That night, the friendly door conveyed yet another message: "When will my little painter come to see me?" And the next morning appeared the simple reply, "Your little painter will breakfast with you to-morrow morning at nine o'clock; leave the door ajar." With much satisfaction, M. Duval proceeded to replace the girlish scribble by another note, saying, "Longing to receive you; your command obeyed."

Éagerly he awaited events, and his hopes were in due course fulfilled. On the following morning, at the appointed hour, Mlle Lançon glided into his apartment, and was rapturously folded in the arms of her new

lover.

The tête-à-tête was delightful, but Duval soon learnt that Mlle Manon was not the innocent little *ingénue* of his imagination. Declaring that she would allow no man to possess her entirely unless he were willing to undertake the responsibility of supporting her, the girl soon proved to the amorous gallant that she was perfectly well able to withstand his advances, and, though she constantly repeated her visits, she always had her own way. The following correspond-

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ence shows how this interesting little affair eventually terminated.

To Monsieur Duval

6th February, 1761 At night

"Yesterday, my dear friend, I said it, and repeat it to you again; I love you very sincerely. You have told me as much, but, on your part, it is only a sudden spark of passion, which, once gratified, will be immediately extinguished, and you will think no more of me. I begin to know mankind! Attend, and I will tell you my sentiments. tired of working in a shop. I wish to be my own mistress, and I want to find somebody who will keep me. If I did not love you, I should endeavour to get all the money I could from you; I should bid you take an apartment for me, and furnish it; but, as you told me you were not rich, we may live in the same lodging, and the difference in the housekeeping will be nothing at all. I shall cost you nothing beyond my board and dress, and, if you are agreeable, allow me one hundred livres per month, and I will find myself in everything. On this plan we may live happily together, and you will no longer have cause to complain of my reserve. If you love me, accept my offer. If you do not, let us seek our own fortunes separately. Good-day to you! I embrace you with all my heart! "LANCON."

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# Letter from Monsieur Duval

5th April, 1761

"You would undoubtedly be surprised, my dear little girl, when you heard that I had left my

lodging so suddenly. Your persistence in refusing to make me completely happy has caused me to give the preference to a lady, whom a little compliance on your part would have easily prevailed upon me to sacrifice to you. You must know, then, that I have made a conquest of a lady, whose rank does not a little flatter my vanity, and it is settled betwixt us that I should go and live with her.

"Be sure, my charmer, that if the moments I have passed with you have not been engaging enough to have made me your constant lover, they have been so far agreeable that you may always esteem me your friend whilst I live.

DUVAL."

# To Monsieur Duval

16th April, 1761

"You inform me that you have left me for a lady of distinction, some great lady without doubt, with whom you are going to live. I am of opinion you gratify your own vanity in telling me this news. I know not if your heart is concerned, but I doubt it. I know that love makes no distinction of ranks; and that he divides women only into two classes, the handsome and the ugly. I know, too, that a young girl of sixteen is always preferable to a great fat creature of forty years of age, though she had the blood of the Bourbons in her veins! Think of this; I give you twenty-four hours to consider it. Believe me, you will never have the same offer made you twice. I would not have you think I am at a loss. I have a lover far beyond you in point of figure; he is, besides, younger than you are; of a better complexion—in short, he is handsome as an angel. Methinks I hear you cry, 'Fie

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for shame!' when I tell you he is my hairdresser. But, do not you know that great ladies of quality often prefer their footmen to their husbands? And surely you will not pretend to dispute their tastes! Ask yourself if she considered rank or condition when she took you? Mine has offered me marriage; but I shall not accept his offer, for I might be tempted to break my marriage vows. If I do not choose to marry him, he agrees to furnish me a lodging, and to spend all his earnings with me. We shall see how it answers; so long as we continue to like one another, everything will go well. Adieu! think of what I say to you. I certainly do love you at this present writing; but it will soon be over, and, though you will want me when you are tired of your lady of quality, you will languish in vain; you will be vexed, and I—I shall laugh LANCON." at you.

Receiving no reply to this taunting epistle, the Lançon had perforce to seek consolation in the arms of her hairdresser. But even this liaison was not of very long duration. After leading him into extravagances beyond his means, and, in fact, ruining him financially, her lover fled to England, leaving Mlle Lançon temporarily stranded, it is true, but determined, nevertheless, to make his fortune anew, and to send for her immediately he had achieved-his object.

# CHAPTER III

#### THE COMTE DU BARRY

ANON'S only course at this juncture was to appeal to her mother, who now had lodgings in the Rue de Bourbon, and supported herself as best she could by undertaking a few housekeeping duties and occasionally tending the sick. But her chief source of income was derived from her nightly visits to the Palais Royal, the Tuileries and the Boulevards, and, as the only alternative meant starvation, her daughter had perforce to accompany her.

By one of those strange, unaccountable dispensations of Providence, however, which sometimes occur, the Franciscan who had incurred the wrath of Mlle Frédérique (the mistress of Manon's godfather), again crossed their path, and was the means of securing a home for the unfortunate Manon. At that time he was acting as chaplain to the wife of the Farmer-General Lagarde, at Courneuve, and, incidentally, as prompter to the comedians of the Château de Courneuve,

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where Madame Lagarde, who was an eccentric old lady, sought a pastime for her advancing years in a little amateur theatre. The friar, knowing of her weakness for young and pretty femininity, ventured to broach the subject of Manon (referring to her as Mlle Lançon de Vaubernier, and passing her off as his niece), and succeeded in arousing the curiosity of Madame to such an extent that an interview was arranged. It took place in due course, and Madame Lagarde waxed so enthusiastic over the lovely girl as to arrange for her installation in her household, as companion to herself. The old lady was very kind to her, lavished fine clothes and even jewellery upon her, and did everything in her power, in fact, to accen-tuate her natural charms. As she dined at Madame's table, and mixed constantly with people of comparatively good birth and high position, her natural receptiveness soon enabled her to act the part of a well-bred demoiselle exceedingly creditably. We find her writing to poor Lamet, at this period, a very characteristic epistle, as follows:-

# To LAMET, at London

Courneuve, August 12th, 1764

"So you are now settled, my dear Lamet, in the service of a lord at a salary of £50 sterling

per year. I give you joy upon it; endeavour to keep your place until fortune shall prove more

favourable to you.

"I am at present in the family of Madame Lagarde, the Farmer-General's widow, as her ladyship's companion. You see I begin to creep into high life. She has two sons; one a gownsman, the other a financier. They both pay their addresses to me; I know not which is the more generous, but I give them both hopes, and strive to engage one of them to take me into keeping. I pretend to great modesty in order to egg them on. "Adieu, my dear friend; I shall inform you of

"Adieu, my dear friend; I shall inform you of every particular thing that relates to myself. Let me hear from you often, and believe me, whilst I

live, Your loving friend,-

"Lançon de Vaubernier."

As far as these sons of Madame's were concerned, it was not long before news of the intrigue they were carrying on with her fascinating little protégée reached their mother's ears, and once more, Mademoiselle had to return to her mother, now married again, and become Madame Rançon. Madame's new husband, however, was only a poorly-paid clerk, so that naturally her mode of living was of the simplest, and though her daughter lived with her very virtuously for a time, the monotonous, sordid existence soon disgusted her. She began to long for a means of escape, and she was not long in finding it. In the street where her

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mother had lodgings—the Rue de Bourbon—lived a certain Marchioness Duquesnoy, who gave card-parties twice a week, and happening to hear of Lançon, she invited the girl to her house to make up the group. In consequence, the fame of her new visitor soon spread, and her house was much resorted to. Here it was that she became acquainted with the "Comte" du Barry.

This so-called "Comte" had in reality

This so-called "Comte" had in reality no claim whatever to the title, either by heritage or through the favour of the king. At the age of twenty-eight, he had come to Paris from Toulouse, having squandered his youth and his fortune in riotous living, possessed of maturer appetites for pleasure, it is true, but filled also with vague ambitions born of the vital spark of that Gascon energy which still slumbered within him.

Aided by the influence of a certain Madame de Malouse, he succeeded in establishing himself in good society. His most cherished ambition lay in the direction of foreign affairs, but he was repeatedly put off by the long-sighted ministers whom he approached in this regard. Rouillé informed him that it would be wise for him to travel for a time in Germany, and succeeded in keeping him quiet with promises of employment in the Circle of Franconia. Rouillé's successor, Bernis, again put him off with idle words,

and then came de Choiseul, who, disdaining to dissemble, immediately dashed all his hopes to the ground, and he had perforce to abandon, for the time being, his dream of entering the diplomatic service.

Turning his attention, therefore, to more material affairs, he managed to obtain, from Berringer, an interest in the supplies for the navy; then, from Belle Isle, an interest in the supplies for the war; and, subsequently, an interest in the provisioning of Corsica.

This stroke of luck naturally restored, to

This stroke of luck naturally restored, to a large extent, his diminished fortune, but he still continued in his reckless extravagances, and became, indeed, a more abandoned rake than ever, until he came to be universally nicknamed the Roué... Nevertheless, that spark of ambitious energy still smouldered.

The Comte du Barry was accustomed to make use of his passions. When, for instance, a liaison had reached the stage of indifference, the cast-off mistress became the dupe through whose medium he sought to restore his fallen fortunes at the gamingtable. In the ravishing beauty of the Lange, however (as the courtesan now called herself), he saw a weapon worthy to be wielded in a more important cause. Waxing enthusiastic over the possibilities that presented themselves, his ambitions soared higher and

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higher as he looked around him, and beheld that reign and kingdom revolving upon women. He lost no time in approaching the Lange, and hastened to write her the following letter, after making the preliminary advances.

# Letter from the Comte Du Barry Paris, 20th June, 1761

"I have already spoken to you several times, my charming creature, concerning your coming to live with me; but I never had a proper opportunity to give you all the reasons, and of showing you all the advantages that should induce you to determine upon it. I will now explain myself more clearly. You will be immediately installed sovereign of my heart; in right of which you become mistress of my house and govern my servants who, from thenceforth, shall be yours. As I see all the best company, you must not be surprised to find dukes, marquises and even princes of the blood coming to visit at my house, or rather yours. They will be bound to pay their respects to you, because you will appear in the highest style, as you will have diamonds and every ornament befitting a woman of the first rank. I have a public assembly once a week, when you will preside, doing the honours of the house. All will become your admirers.

"As soon as you come to me, I will give you a few preparatory lessons. With your accomplishments and graces, you will not fail to be admired and adored by all who behold you. Consider of what I here write, and give your consent. I shall go

to-morrow to the Marchioness Duquesnoy's, when

I expect your answer.

"I am, in the meantime, with the most inviolable attachment, my charming girl—Yours, etc.,
"Le Comte du Barry."

What girl, with a temperament such as that of the Lange, could have resisted such an offer? It was the life she had been waiting for ever since she had outlined her ambitions to young Duval in the Rue St Honoré.

#### CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST MEETING WITH THE KING

U BARRY'S mistress she accordingly became, and, while the count was kind to her, was very happy according to her lights. She writes to her mother as follows:—

# To Madame Rançon

"My Dear Mother,—My Swiss told you I was not at home yesterday. It should not have happened so, if I had known of your coming. But our assembly was so late before it broke up that I rose later than usual yesterday. Hitherto, I find nothing but what is agreeable in my new establishment. The count seems to be attached to me; he refuses me nothing, and is, indeed, eager to anticipate my wishes. Our assemblies are exceedingly brilliant, and if I may judge from the attentions paid to me, and the number and quality of the persons I see here, I think I should be at no loss to find a new establishment, in case the count should take it into his head to become reconciled to her whom I have supplanted, or any other accident should break off our connection.

"However, I will not trouble my head about what may happen hereafter; I hate thinking, and

love to enjoy the present moment.

"Adieu, my dear mother! The bearer of this will give you six louis d'or. Come to me tomorrow at 11 o'clock. Do not say you are my mother, and ask for Mlle Lange, which is the name I pass by here. VAUBERNIER LANGE."

Obviously, however, the count did not remain for long the adoring lover, to judge by another letter, written shortly afterwards, which we reproduce below:—

# To M. RADIX DE ST-FOIX, Treasurer-General of the Navy

"My DEAR ST-FOIX,—I am extremely unhappy. You could not possibly imagine how ill du Barry behaves towards me. I am tired of being exposed to the brutality and caprices of his temper. If my situation has had its sweets, they are now embittered by his tyranny, and I am determined to break with him, and leave his house. Amongst the number of gentlemen who frequent his house, you are the person I like best, for you seem to be of an amiable disposition. I give you now a fair opportunity of proving the sincerity of all the fine things you have said to me, and the great protestations you have made to me. But, remember, I mean nothing but a serious connection; on no other terms will I engage with you. You know well I have sufficient choice; but I have a regard for you, and I give you the refusal. We shall both be gainers if you consent to my proposal. You will have the entire possession of a woman who has some pretensions to beauty, and I shall have the satisfaction to be no longer within the power of a tyrant.

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"Adieu! determine speedily and let me have your answer.

"I am, if you choose it, entirely yours,

"L'ANGE."

But, in spite of the feelings of disgust with which she now regarded the Comte du Barry, he exercised an almost hypnotic influence over her, and, while she was thus endeavouring to loose the bonds which at present held her, there occurred an incident which stirred to life again all the slumbering ambitions of the Comte, causing him to tighten the rein by which he held his rebellious mistress prisoner. News of her beauty had reached the ears of Le Bel, the favourite and confidential valet of Louis XV. He made haste to learn with his own eyes whether the reports of her wonderful loveliness had been exaggerated, and the account of his visit to the du Barry establishment is described in the following letter, written by the Lange to her mother:—

## To MADAME RANÇON

3rd June, 1768

"You know, my dear mother, what cause I have had here for uneasiness and despondency. I could never have supposed that a man for whom I felt no passion should have gained such an ascendancy over me as the count has done. However, since I saw you, things were carried to such

a length that I had determined to leave him. I had for that purpose written to a man who pretended to love me, but, though he was of a temper to sacrifice everything to the pleasures of the moment, he had his difficulties about engaging on a settled plan, and seemed unwilling to take charge of me. I was just thinking of making another choice, when an event, as fortunate as it was unexpected, made me alter my resolution, and has attached me more than ever to du Barry. I have no time to relate particulars. I can only say that M. Le Bel, valet de chambre to His Majesty, and his confidant, is to dine here to-day. The count spoke to him concerning me, and you may guess why he is coming here, and what the count's designs are. We expect Le Bel every moment whilst I write. Rejoice with me, my dear mother! Though nothing is yet certain, I cannot resist entertaining the most flattering hopes. The count has made me pass for his sister-in-law, and I am prepared to act my part accordingly. But I hear M. Le Bel's coach, and I leave off writing to receive him.

"Adieu, my dear mother!
"VAUBERNIER LANGE."

There are many stories extant as to the manner in which the first interview with the king was arranged, but the following would seem to be the most likely version. A supper was held at Le Bel's, given in honour of the new beauty and the Comte du Barry. On this occasion the Lange was at her best, and, quite unconscious of her royal audience, exercised all the seductive arts of which she

#### THE FIRST MEETING WITH THE KING

was a past-mistress to such effect, that she succeeded in charming the eyes of the king, who, forewarned by Le Bel, was observing the festive scene through a spyhole in the wall of the dining-room. So favourable, indeed, was His Majesty's first impression,

that he sent for her that very night.

Du Barry's mistress had the honesty to refrain from playing the inexperienced ingènue. She did not disgust His Majesty by assuming that ludicrous mask of innocence with which so many women had sought to win the king's favour. Quite natural and unaffected, utterly free from self-consciousness, she treated the king as a man, and he was still man enough to fall in love with her at this first interview.

## CHAPTER V

#### AT VERSAILLES

HE impression which the Lange made upon the king was not exactly what Le Bel had anticipated, and having been informed by the Comte du Barry, in the meantime, of the humble origin and utter social insignificance of the king's new love, he feared for the consequences of his rash act. Deeming it the most politic course to pursue, he confessed to his royal master that he had deceived him in regard to the Lange, and that she was neither a married nor a titled woman. He was proceeding to enumerate the disastrous consequences that would ensue from a continuance of the liaison, but the king cut him short, ordering him peremptorily to have her married, and, when this necessary ceremony was accomplished, to bring her to him at Compiègne.

Here was the Comte du Barry's opening. Immediately upon learning from Le Bel the nature of the king's desire, he communicated with his brother Guillaume, as notorious a

#### AT VERSAILLES

spendthrift as himself, though but a poor officer of marines, informing him that he had arranged for him a singularly advantageous marriage. Guillaume du Barry proved most obliging, and, indeed, eagerly desirous of falling in with his brother's plans. He hastened to take the necessary steps and this farcical union took place at St Laurent, on the 1st September, 1768. Her husband returned to Toulouse and Madame du Barry was duly installed at Compiègne. Once more we find her writing to her old lover, Lamet, acquainting him with her marvellous good fortune.

# To Lamet in London Compiègne, 3rd September, 1768

"I have just received your letter, my dear Lamet. It was next to a miracle that it found me after the alteration in my fortune. Luckily, they sent it from Mme Lagarde's to my mother, who handed it safely to me. You wish me to go to you at London, where you doubt not to make my fortune. But all that I can ever hope to get by your English lords, would not equal what I at present enjoy and which at one time I could never presume to expect. You little thought, when we lived together, that you possessed a woman who should one day have a title and become the mistress of His Most Christian Majesty. I think I see you now rubbing your eyes, as doubting whether you are perfectly awake, while you read this part. But it is even so, my

poor Lamet, I have married (for form's sake only), a great fat fellow, a Comte Giullaume du Barry, and I am at this present moment at Compiègne, where I exercise, with all its powers, the office of the favourite Sultana. I have no need to enjoin you to secrecy; you must be sensible of what consequence it is to yourself, as well as to me, not to gossip unwisely.

"To make you some amends for the 1000 crowns I have cost you, I send you enclosed a bill for £ 1000 sterling. It is payable to the bearer, so that when you receive the money you will have

no occasion to give your name.

"Pray write to me no more, until I shall point out in what way you are to send your letters. I expect you will use your discretion, and you may rely on my friendship, of which I wish to give you proofs."

There is no record of any further correspondence, so it is to be presumed that, with the writing of this letter, Lamet passed out of her life for ever.

We next find Madame established at the Court of Versailles. For the time being she was given the suite of apartments hitherto occupied by Le Bel, and it was not long before a hotel in the Rue d'Orangerie was prepared for the reception of the servants and carriages of the new mistress.

At last, the du Barry was able to give full rein to her extravagant tastes, and lost no time in surrounding herself with luxurious

#### AT VERSAILLES

evidences of her new position. Her salon and bedroom were crowded with the most beautiful objets d'art; both rooms were furnished to the minutest detail, with a lavish disregard for expense. Beautiful timepieces, rare bronzes and china, an English pianoforte in rosewood, cabinets and secretaires embellished by the most exquisite carving—all these things made of her new abode a fitting setting for its beautiful occupant, who, every whim gratified, now lived the life she loved.

But Madame was not left entirely to her own devices. The man who had worked so indefatigably to bring about this eagerly-anticipated event—the Comte Jean du Barry—had no intention of relaxing his hold on his former mistress, now that there was a tangible possibility of her serving his purpose. As has been already indicated, the Comte was not merely a vulgar bon viveur, content to wallow in the mire of debauchery, and, now more sanguine than ever as to the ultimate realisation of his political aspirations, he constituted himself her guide and mentor. In this capacity, the man evinced the ability of a genius. A keen observer of human nature, he had at once divined what was to result from the first royal interview—what was to be the future of the du Barry.

Confident of the infallibility of his own

judgment, he was alike undaunted by the mocking gibes of Richelieu, the king's first gentleman, and Le Bel (who regarded their royal master's liaison as the caprice of a moment), and the contemptuous indifference of that powerful minister and arch-enemy of du Barry, de Choiseul, who, in his turn, saw Richelieu's hand in the new intrigue, but did not even condescend to be angry with him.

To the advances of the favourite herself, who, naturally, did not bear towards him the same feelings of enmity as did the Roué, the duke turned a deaf ear, maintaining an attitude of haughty, dignified indifference.

However, du Barry's intuition had not deceived him. Before long, de Choiseul had perforce to recognise that the king was not merely indulging a temporary whim, and he then committed the fatal error which proved to be the first step towards his downfall.

In this war against one woman, he allowed himself to be influenced by another—his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont—who, ever since the death of the Pompadour, had been endeavouring to establish herself in the king's good graces. Vain had been her efforts, however, for the king was tired of being ruled by political women. He had been delivered from that undesirable state



Louis the Fifteenth of France
From a contemporary painting



#### AT VERSAILLES

of affairs when he lost Mme de Pompadour, and he had quite determined never again to

enter that state of bondage.

It was probably her very ignorance in this respect that had largely contributed towards the success of the du Barry. The Duchesse de Grammont, furious at having been displaced by such a rival, incited her brother to open and extravagant expressions of hostility. She it was who organised that perfect avalanche of jests and songs which was hurled at the du Barry by every vulgar mob in the streets of Paris; she it was who, in the red heat of her anger, inspired that witty ally of the de Choiseul party, Voltaire, to write Le Roi Pétaud, which, even for those days, was a marvel of indecency.

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#### CHAPTER VI

#### DE CHOISEUL INTERVENES

N the meantime, the Comte du Barry had deemed it wise to make his first move. This was to secure for the royal favourite the constant companionship of his sister, Mlle Françoise du Barry, a woman of much intelligence, who had made something of a name for herself in the world of letters, having been a frequent contributor to Le Mercure. She was ugly and unattractive enough, moreover, to preclude all possibility of jealous fears arising in the breast of her pupil.

From every point of view, the Comte could not have made a wiser choice. Through the medium of his sister, he, in Paris, trained the Comtesse for the creditable enactment of her new rôle, with the utmost care. He employed quite a staff of young men as couriers, so that by means of lengthy and frequent correspondence, he could keep in constant touch with the woman on whom he was to rely for the fulfilment of his

dearest hopes.

#### DE CHOISEUL INTERVENES

The du Barry proved herself a worthy pupil of such a past-master in the art of intrigue. So excellent was the progress she made, that not once, during the year which followed that memorable first interview with her royal master, was the favourite exposed to that worst and most fatal form of humiliation—ridicule!

To the hostile vulgarities for which the Duc de Choiseul and the Duchesse de Grammont were responsible, but which had only served to confirm the king in his love, the Comte du Barry replied with the Amours of the Duchesse de Choiseul. It was obviously to be war to the knife, and the Comte, encouraged by the king's attitude, and by the continued success of the favourite, deemed the psychological moment was at hand. He urged upon Madame du Barry the necessity for bringing about her presentation—that all-important ceremony without which the mistress remained the mistress only, but which, once performed, transformed the mistress into the royal favourite.

The favourite—with the right of taking part in Court functions—of riding in carriages—of living openly with the king and being recognised by all the Court—the right of recommending to the ministers—of receiving state visits from ambassadors and grandees—all those rights, in fact, which

to the Comte du Barry meant the attain-

ment of his object.

It was not enough for him that Madame de Pompadour's apartments had now been placed at the disposal of the new mistress, who, before the bestowal of this latest mark of royal favour, had been living in almost secret seclusion in the château.

Certainly, this was a forward step, but it was the actual presentation the Comte desired, and, in order to bring about the event as soon as possible, he determined to anticipate the designs of the Duc de Choiseul, whom he had no doubt was doing his utmost to frustrate his own plans in this connection.

The ceremony requiring a sponsor, he began his plan of campaign by appealing to a certain Comtesse de Béarn, in Paris, to act in this capacity. He had been fortunate enough to obtain the life-long gratitude of this lady, as he had succeeded in winning a case for her—a huge lawsuit against the House of Saluces—on the death of her husband, and in obtaining a substantial provision for herself and her five fatherless children.

The task of obtaining her consent, therefore, was a comparatively easy one. Everything now appeared to be admirably settled in regard to this important step, when the Comte's hopes were temporarily dashed to

#### DE CHOISEUL INTERVENES

the ground, and again by the all-powerful de Choiseul.

The de Choiseul party, becoming alarmed by the turn events had taken, brought all their influence to bear upon poor Madame de Béarn, terrifying her with visions of what would result from her acquiescence in this affair, and succeeding in working on her feelings to such an extent as to persuade her to simulate a sprain, which she proffered as an excuse for failing to keep her promise to the Comte du Barry.

However, the Comte had yet another card to play. He now approached a lady of by no means unimpeachable virtue—Madame d'Alogny—and, tempting her with all sorts of promises, persuaded her to present herself at Court. This first step taken, it was necessary to obtain further support, of a different nature, and this he found in the

person of Richelieu.

Although the latter had, at the outset, been somewhat satirical, and had shared the prevailing opinion that the du Barry affair was destined to be of short duration, he was now, in the face of all that had occurred, prepared to take the risk of furthering her cause.

His opportunities for so doing were naturally manifold as he was in close and daily contact with the king. Jealous of the

place de Choiseul occupied, and of the power he wielded—de Choiseul, who still continued to treat the du Barry intrigue with lofty contempt—he saw, in the growing influence of the favourite, the prospect of a triumphant revenge. He began to discover in her, in fact, not only the woman, the courtesan, the mistress of the king, but the means to an end—the weapon with

which a party kills a party.

The Comte could therefore rely absolutely upon the aid of Richelieu, and the latter, in his turn, proceeded to exercise all his influence upon the king. He sought, by every means in his power, to strengthen his passion, declaring that jealousy and spite promoted the virtuous attitude adopted by the Court, laying subtle emphasis on the importance of the rights of a king, and intimating that pleasure was one of the first of those rights.

Would it be acting like a king, argued Richelieu, if he refrained from making his ministers and his Court submit to his royal choice? In this manner he set to work to bring about that presentation which he now desired as ardently as the Comte du Barry; thus did he endeavour to inspire the king with the courage to act in accordance with his own august desires and in defiance of

Court feeling.

#### DE CHOISEUL INTERVENES

But even Richelieu was not to prove the boldest, the most powerful ally of Madame du Barry. It was in a younger branch of his family, in the person of that friend and confidant of the dauphin, M. d'Aiguillon, that she found her strongest

support.

De Choiseul and d'Aiguillon were at daggers drawn. Possessed of personalities diametrically opposed, each was the respective champion of his age. M. de Choiseul was a Jansenist, a Parliamentarian, a philosopher, an advocate of Church and State reform; M. d'Aiguillon passionately cherished the traditions of his family, and was an ardent disciple of the school of his great-uncle, Cardinal Richelieu, a supporter of the doctrine which insists on the divine right of kings tempered by the divine right of the Church.

Such a war of ideas between men of so much power and influence was naturally far-reaching in its effects. Alarmed by the support d'Aiguillon gained so rapidly after the victory of Saint-Cast; the open support of the dauphin, Saint-Sulpice and the devout party at Court; and the secret sympathy of Louis XV himself, de Choiseul set La Chalotais at his enemy. To Brittany, where the Jesuits were endeavouring to bring about a Restoration with the authorisa-

tion of the governor — d'Aiguillon — de Choiseul sent La Chalotais, the man who had furnished such a vivid description of the Jesuits in his famous *Account*.

The result of de Choiseul's move was

immediate. Above d'Aiguillon, above his arch-enemy de Choiseul, we see the Jesuits and Parliamentarians at loggerheads, and the great trial, to which eighteen hundred witnesses were summoned, becomes the arena where the two forces which divided France dominate alternately. Now it is d'Aiguillon who triumphs, aided by the protection of the dauphin, dauphine and queen; now de Choiseul's influence over the king is increased on the death of the Pompadour; that influence is again weakened by the disquieting rumours of Broglie as to the Austrian policy of the Duc de Choiseul; again, d'Aiguillon is rendered less powerful by the deaths of the dauphin, dauphine and queen.

This war of many passions still continued, and the case was still under investigation at the time of du Barry's arrival at the Court. D'Aiguillon and his party, seeing a means of salvation in the new intrigue, were filled with renewed hope, and they proceeded to zealously champion the cause of the woman through whose medium, as acknowledged mistress of the

#### DE CHOISEUL INTERVENES

king, they hoped to strike their deadliest blows. In d'Aiguillon, therefore, the Comte found a new and enthusiastic ally, and the du Barry a charming courtier ready to do homage to her beauty.

## CHAPTER VII

#### THE PRESENTATION

BUT in spite even of this additional support, the hour of the du Barry's crowning triumph was not yet come. Mme d'Alogny had been at Court a month, but the king remained as yet undecided. He still hesitated to take the final step—still retained sufficient modesty to have some consideration for the feelings of his

daughters.

The anxious trio—the Comte du Barry, Richelieu and d'Aiguillon — deeming it necessary to act at once, commanded their tool to make one last supreme effort. She was to throw herself in tears at the feet of the king and implore him to bring about that desirable state of affairs which would put an end to the malicious insults of her enemies—to hasten, in short, that presentation which had been announced for so long in the foreign journals, but which seemed to be receding to a remoter distance day by day.

The du Barry played her part to perfec-

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tion; the king was touched and she rose from her knees with her prayer granted. On the 21st April, 1769, the royal decree was issued. On his return from the hunt, the king announced that the long-talked-of presentation was to take place upon the following day, and was, moreover, to be an affair of exceptional magnificence. The great day dawned, and the gay world of Paris flocked to Versailles. All day long the park gates were besieged by curious crowds, eager to catch a glimpse of the famous beauty. As the hour approached, Richelieu, as first gentleman, took up his position on one side of the king, and de Choiseul, his trusted minister, on the other. Each searched the face of his enemy; each cast surreptitious glances at the face of the king, who took out his watch and began anxiously to count the minutes.

Straining his ears for every sound that might herald the all-important arrival, he muttered impatient exclamations as the muffled roar of voices from the direction of the park and avenues was borne towards him on the still night air. Turning to de Choiseul, he demanded the cause of this clamour. "Sire," came the reply, in tones pregnant with subtle satire, "the people, informed that it was to-day Madame du Barry was to have the honour of being pre-

sented to Your Majesty, have trooped up from every part to witness her entry, since they cannot see the reception you will give her."

The minutes flew by, and still Madame did not appear. De Choiseul's heart beat high with hope; Richelieu, almost despairing, felt all his former confidence deserting him. And the king, after gazing silently out of the window for some time, was making up his mind to countermand the presentation, when Richelieu, who had just caught sight of a carriage and recognised the liveries of the delinquent, cried excitedly, "Sire, here is Madame du Barry; she will come in if you will give the command." Upon the words, enter Madame, behind the Comtesse de Béarn, who, after all, had been pressed into the service.

Dressed in queenly attire, covered with diamonds worth 100,000 francs—the gift of the king—the perfect oval of her face framed by that aureole of palest gold, the beautiful silken locks, which, demanding so much attention, had been the cause of the delay, du Barry's greatest enemies in that supreme moment could not escape the magic of her charm. Who, indeed, could have failed to pay enthusiastic homage to such exquisite beauty! Who could have failed to appreciate the rarity of the type; the beautiful

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eyes of deepest blue whose expression was an almost indescribable combination of the passionate ardour of the brunette and the mild, smiling sweetness of the blonde; the small, finely-carved Greek nose; the lovely mouth; the wonder of her complexion; the perfect symmetry of her voluptuous but slender form! And this was the radiant vision which the Comtesse de Béarn presented to the king, to the mesdames, to the dauphin, and to the children of France.

The day following the presentation was a Sunday, and Madame du Barry attended the king's Mass, occupying the late Mme de Pompadour's place in the chapel of the château. Very few of the lords or the ladies of the Court were present on this occasion, but it was observed that a considerable number of bishops attended the king, with the chief of whom—the ducal Archbishop of Reims—His Majesty conversed frequently during the service. After Mass, Madame was seen at Mesdames' concert and that of Monseigneur the Dauphin.

But, although the du Barry had won her heart's desire, her victory was not yet complete. She had still to overcome the prejudices of the titled women of the Court, and the natural reluctance of some of the oldest families in Versailles to welcome this daughter

of the people into their midst.

The king, therefore, being of course fully cognisant of the state of affairs, arranged for a visit to Marly, thinking that a suspension of the strict Court etiquette which prevailed at Versailles would help to secure for his mistress the friendship of those who now looked at her askance. Usually only a very select party accompanied the king on these journeys, and it was naturally regarded as a great honour to be included among the favoured few. On this occasion the king was careful to invite all those exclusive ladies whom he was most desirous of conciliating.

Marly was a veritable temple of pleasure, where all the Court ceremonies were abandoned. Pavilions, ornamental fountains, beautiful statues, exquisite flowers filling the air with their perfume, made of Marly a

palace of sensuous delights.

But Louis' hopes were destined to be

short-lived.

The grandes dames persisted in their neglect of the beautiful favourite, until the atmosphere of restraint became almost unbearable. Even the common vice of gambling failed to unite the two distinct factions - the friends and the enemies of the du Barryand it was even rumoured that the Princesse de Guémenée had insulted her whilst playing with the king, and had, in consequence, been ordered by His Majesty to retire.

#### THE PRESENTATION

Thus isolated and abandoned, the royal favourite had perforce to depend for the society of her own sex upon Madame d'Alogny and the Comtesse who had been

paid the sum of 100,000 livres to chaperon her, and the king, disgusted by the failure of his plans, ordered the return to Versailles.

Madame du Barry was not discouraged, however, even by this demonstration of disfavour. She continued to play her part, aided by the Comte's instructions, with delicate finesse; her demeanour was characterised by a most perfect modesty; skilfully she brought all her native tact to her aid in the conciliation of those jealous women whose envy she had no desire to arouse. She made her place at Court quite little, endeavouring to keep in the background as much as possible, and to so arrange her favour that it should hurt nobody.

At last, by imperceptible degrees, as her position grew more established, as the good qualities of this accommodating favourite became more apparent, the quarantine became correspondingly less severe. Individuals became courageous enough to ignore the sentiments of their own particular party, and not much surprise was occasioned, therefore, when at Bellevue, Madame de Flavacourt boldly announced her intention of joining Madame du Barry in her game of

vingt-et-un, and was supported by the Duc de Richelieu, who exclaimed that he was en-

tirely at Madame du Barry's service.

After this incident there was a very appreciable turn in the tide of Court favour, and it was not long before Madame du Barry was able to grant the Comtesse de Béarn the freedom for which she had long

been pining.

De Choiseul, becoming alarmed by the change, imitated the move adopted by Fleury when he wished to force the hand of his royal master; he left the Court for Chanteloup. But, on his return, although his credit was still unimpaired, although he still stood high in the king's favour, so also did Madame du Barry! By this time she had gathered around her quite a powerful coterie of intimates. Courtiers and poets paid her homage, lackeys and buffoons she had without number, and their rivalry of abasement began its course. A story is told of a poor little lame, deformed nobleman—the Duc de Tresmes-who, one day, addressed a note to the favourite, worded—The monkey of Madame la Comtesse du Barry has come to call on her.

As the popularity of the favourite increased, life at the Court naturally became much brighter. There ensued one of those periods of dissipation and freedom from the

#### THE PRESENTATION

restraint of Court etiquette with which the king sought to dispel the fits of intense melancholy to which he was frequently subject.

It was during this time that, at dinner one evening, there occurred that amusing incident which is singularly illustrative of the child-like naïvety and girlish light-

heartedness of Madame du Barry.

As was her custom, she had seated herself at table next to the king, and, for some time, was occupied with a pretty little dog which had just been presented to her, fondling it in her lap and allowing it to eat off her own plate. Whilst she was thus amusing herself, His Majesty ventured to neglect his beautiful mistress and her little dog for a few moments, to discuss, with Richelieu, the affairs of Europe! Just at the moment when the king was most engrossed in the conversation, the dog jumped on to the table, making a most comical obeisance to du Barry, who was highly delighted. Laughing with childish glee, she vainly tried to attract the king's attention, until, impatient at not being answered at once, she shook him violently by the sleeve, crying, "Look! oh! do look!"

Consternation and horror were written large upon the faces of everyone at table, but politics gave way in due course to the antics

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of the little spaniel, which the king in his

turn, thoroughly enjoyed.

The playful eccentricities of his youthful mistress evidently did not distress His Majesty in the least, for every day he offered her fresh proofs of his affection. There is a pretty story told of how, one day, Louis dropped his snuff-box, and Madame du Barry stooped immediately to pick it up, bending her knee, as she handed it to him, in a graceful courtesy. "But, madame," said the king, with courtly gallantry, "that is the position for me to assume towards you, now and for ever."

Nevertheless, Madame du Barry could well afford occasionally to enact the rôle of humble suppliant, for experience had taught her that at the feet of the king she could accomplish anything. A few days after the occurrence of the episode just recorded, she received another proof of her power.

A certain Comte and Comtesse de Louerme had become involved in financial difficulties, and their creditors determined to enforce the law. There was some slight resistance on the part of the Comte and Comtesse which rendered them liable to arrest for defying the king's officers, and, as a result, they were tried and condemned to death. Their two daughters threw themselves at the king's feet, praying for mercy, but the king replied

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that their parents had committed an offence which it was beyond even his power to pardon, and left the daughters to their despair. Suddenly, however, Madame du Barry knelt before him, declaring that she would never rise from that position until the king had promised to grant their request. This appeal was effectual, and the sentence was revoked. Tenderly assisting her to rise, the king gallantly exclaimed, "Madame, I am pleased that the first favour you should ask of me is an act of mercy!"

## CHAPTER VIII

DE CHOISEUL SUBMITS

HE du Barry faction was now strengthened by another reinforcement, in the person of Maupeon, the man who, in 1768, had become Chancellor of France by promising to ruin d'Aiguillon in the trial which was to take place that year before the Parliament of Paris,

Concealing his capacity for intrigue beneath a mask of Court buffoonery and giddy frivolity, this courtier of the antechamber assiduously cultivated all those who exercised even the smallest influence at Court. There are some men who make it a rule always to belong to the *strongest* party, and who appear to be easily able to effect a compromise with conscience in this respect; to this class Maupeon belonged. Though a creature of de Choiseul, he cherished, in reality, sentiments entirely opposed to those of the man to whom he outwardly professed allegiance.

Immediately after the presentation,

#### DE CHOISEUL SUBMITS

Maupeon, in order to ingratiate himself with the king, laid claim to relationship with the du Barrys. Discovering that the Comte Jean claimed to be connected with the illustrious Earls of Barrymore, of Ireland, to which family he himself belonged, he supported this pretty theory, promptly addressing the du Barry as his "dear cousin," which circumstance naturally gave His Majesty considerable pleasure. He then proceeded to establish himself in the favourite's good graces, and eventually, the man who had vowed to de Choiseul to bring about the downfall of d'Aiguillon, promised (after dwelling upon the hostile attitude of de Choiseul, and the contempt with which he regarded her, until the du Barry's wounded pride was up in arms) to accomplish for the favourite the overthrow of de Choiseul. For the attainment of his object, he proposed to use all his influence with the king to induce him to destroy the great power behind de Choiseul — the parliaments.

Maupeon, of course, was not without his adherents, who also helped to swell the ranks of the du Barry party. Terray (whom he had made Controller-General), Maillebois, and the Comte de Broglie (the adviser and secret and intimate correspondent of Louis XV), all rallied around the favourite. De

Choiseul daily beheld her influence increasing, her circle of powerful allies widening; he saw Richelieu, d'Aiguillon and Maupeon—three of the most powerful men in France—arrayed against him, all working for the same end; and even those whom he had hitherto believed to be his true and loyal supporters deserted him to follow the popular example.

He saw, too, that Madame was now beginning to find many friends among the influential women who, in the beginning of her rule had assiduously avoided her. Like so many sheep, the great ladies of the Court followed in the wake of that inveterate gambler-the Maréchale de Mirepoix-who habitually patronised a new favourite with obvious intent!

He saw the young Comte de la Marche bending the knee in homage to the Comtesse du Barry, in defiance of his father's commands, and finally becoming her devoted

knight of honour.

At last de Choiseul was forced to recognise that it was time to submit to the inevitable. Assuring the king of his respect for His Majesty's wishes and those of her whom he also desired to loyally serve, he begged him not to render him responsible for the haughty attitude of aloofness maintained towards the du Barry by his wife and sister, asserting

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that he had done his utmost to overcome

their prejudices.

By this move, a truce was declared between the two Court factions, and we find the du Barry writing to the Comte Jean as follows:—

## To the COMTE DU BARRY

25th July, 1769

"I am more than ever, my brother, in the king's good graces, and I stand upon the best footing at Court. The Duc de Richelieu is entirely at my devotion. The chancellor, as you know, is become my cousin, and pays me the greatest respect. The Duc de Choiseul no longer hates me as before. . . ."

The king had now the satisfaction of beholding his beautiful mistress surrounded by the Duchesse de Mirepoix, the Duchesse de Montmorency, the Duchesse de Valentinois and the Comtesse de l'Hôpital. The Marquise de Montmorency even became so intimate as to suggest a kinsman of hers—the Duc de Boutteville—as a husband for the fayourite's sister-in-law.

On the occasion of the next royal visit to Compiègne, Madame du Barry was allowed the sweet revenge of erasing from the list of ladies invited the names of the Comtesse de Brionne, the Duchesse de Grammont and the Comtesse de Grammont. On the return

from Compiègne, M. le Prince de Condé proved himself the devoted servant of Madame, receiving her with royal ceremony at Chantilly. Constant and powerful additions, indeed, were being made to the favourite's circle of intimates, whose universal popularity was now an incontestable fact.

At the camp of Compiègne there occurred an incident which seemed to temporarily alienate the Duc de Choiseul from his royal master. M. de la Tour du Pin had accorded the du Barry all the honours usually rendered only to the royal family, and de Choiseul considered it his duty to reprove the chevalier for what he considered a serious breach of etiquette. As a consequence the following letter, published in the *Revue de Paris*, Vol. IV, 1829, appears to have been addressed by His Majesty to the over-zealous minister:—

"I am told that you have scolded the Chevalier de la Tour du Pin, in connection with Madame du Barry, because she dined in the camp, and the greater part of the officers had dined with her on the day of the review. . . . You promised me that I should hear no more talk of you in her connection."

Madame herself was much annoyed by this latest offence, and did not fail to show it, in her girlish fashion, by treating him to sundry sly grimaces, and indulging in witty

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sallies at his expense, of which the following

is a typical example.

She met one day, on the staircase, one of her cooks, who seemed to her to resemble the Duc de Choiseul. "Are you one of my servants?" said she to the man. "Yes, Madame," answered he. "Go!" said Madame du Barry, "your appearance is inauspicious. Tell my steward that I desire never to see your face again, and let him discharge you instantly." The thing was done. That same evening, Madame related the incident to the king, adding, "You see, I have sacked my Choiseul, when will you sack yours?"

Then, influenced by d'Aiguillon, she gave the duke a more serious proof of her dis-pleasure. De Choiseul had set his heart on obtaining for his son, the Vicomte de Choiseul, the place of Captain-Lieutenant of Light Horse of the King's Guard, but du Barry stepped in, and had the favour bestowed elsewhere, as indicated in the

following letter:-

## To the Duc D'AIGUILLON

"You are too much my friend, sir, for me to let any opportunity slip of doing you service. "I have asked the king's consent to your being Commandant of the Light Horse Guards, a commission which you wish to purchase. 'But the Duc de Choiseul asks it of me for the Vicomte de

Choiseul,' says the king to me. 'In that case,' replied I, 'there is an additional reason why you should grant my request—to compensate me in some degree for his ill-behaviour to me.' His Majesty smiled, and said he could refuse me nothing. You are content, therefore, and so am I. My compliments to my dear friend, Mdme d'Aiguillon. I wish you good-day, Monsieur le Commandant."

But, though the clouds seemed to be gathering fast around him, M. de Choiseul did not lose faith in the ultimate success of his projects, and still relied on the support of those who were disgusted by the du Barry intrigue. The king, for his part, was loth to part with his minister. He had become so entirely accustomed to him that he really believed him to be absolutely indispensable, and the only man capable of managing affairs. He could not bear the idea of a change, of any hitch in the monarchical routine. Tired, therefore, of attempting to bring minister and mistress together, he writes a conciliatory letter to de Choiseul, defending his line of conduct in regard to the du Barry, it is true, but deigning also to explain it in detail. The letter appeared in the Revue de Paris, 1829, Vol. IV, and reads as follows:-

"... I begin with M. d'Aiguillon. How can you believe that he would replace you? 'Tis true,

#### DE CHOISEUL SUBMITS

I love him well enough, because of the trick I

played him long ago.\*

"Hated as he is, what good could he do? You manage my business well, I am pleased with you; but beware of advisers and busybodies; they are what I have always hated and now detest more than ever. You know Madame du Barry, it was certainly not Richelieu who made me acquainted with her, although he knew her, and he dares not see her; and the only time he has seen her for a moment, it was by my express order. I think I knew her before her marriage. She is pretty, I am glad of it, and I recommend her also daily to beware of advisers and busybodies: for you will readily believe she has no lack of them. She has no dislike of you; she knows your wit and wishes you no harm. The attacks upon her have been terrible and for the most part motiveless. They would be at her feet if. . . . So the world wags. She is very pretty, she pleases me, and that ought to be enough."

Monsieur de Choiseul, on receipt of this letter, sought an interview with Madame du Barry, but, though it lasted three hours, he gained but little satisfaction from it. She was not to be won over thus easily; Maupeon and d'Aiguillon had done their work too well.

<sup>\*</sup> D'Aiguillon's mistress, Madame de Chateauroux, to whom he was much attached, deserted him for His Majesty.

# CHAPTER IX

THE DUCHESSE DE GRAMMONT IN DISGRACE

THE last frail hope to which de Choiseul now clung was that he might get the du Barry away before the arrival of the dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, one of the Duc d'Aiguillon's staunchest supporters. He therefore commanded the Duc de Noailles to endeavour to alarm her by prophecies of the humiliation which would be hers if she came under the ban of Marie Antoinette's displeasure, and to persuade her, if possible, to retire for a time to Barèges, under pretence of taking the waters there. So well did the duke perform this delicate commission, that the du Barry would certainly have gone, had it not been for the watchfulness of d'Aiguillon and Richelieu. The latter, ever vigilant, exposed the de Choiseul policy in the following letter:-

## From the Duc de Richelieu

"Take care, adorable Countess, how you listen to the idea which the Duc de Noailles has put

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into your head to go to the waters of Barèges in order to avoid being present on the arrival of the dauphiness, under pretence that you would make but an indifferent figure at the entertainments which will be given solely on her account, and that you might be exposed to mortifications from the princess. The Duc de Noailles, who has given you this advice, cannot really be your friend. He has been set on by the Duc de Choiseul, who wishes to profit by your absence in order to weaken that ascendancy which you have acquired over His Majesty. You are the king's divinity; don't quit him for a moment. Young and handsome as you are, you have no notion of the danger that there is in absence. They would seek to win him from an attachment in which his happiness consists, and which they would represent to him in a very different light. Age weakens the force of the inclinations, unless they be continually excited. I will say no more to you, my divine Countess; but know that, if you once absent yourself, you hazard all."

To this letter d'Aiguillon added his persuasions, and so the du Barry stayed on, and that was the beginning of the end, in so far as the Duc de Choiseul was concerned. She made herself so charming that she was most graciously received by Marie Antoinette, who, for a time, sought her out on every possible occasion. Madame thanked d'Aiguillon for his advice to her by using all her influence with the king to get him to terminate the proceedings against

the duke, in parliament. This the king did, signing the necessary documents without delay, and d'Aiguillon, overcome with gratitude, made the favourite a present of a magnificent vis-à-vis where the arms of the du Barry were surrounded by beds of roses upon which doves pecked at one another, hearts pierced with arrows, torches, quivers, all the emblems of love, the whole surmounted by a garland of flowers of such richness that the king forbade Madame du Barry ever to use the carriage. It had cost the duke 52,000 livres.

But, in the meantime, the du Barry's worst enemy, the Duchesse de Grammont, had not been idle during the visit of Marie Antoinette. The dauphiness, it is recorded, was quite innocent of the favourite's real position at Court, but the Duchesse lost no time in undeceiving her, and so changed the hitherto friendly feelings which she had entertained towards the favourite to bitter animosity. So intense became her dislike that she vowed she would encompass her ruin as soon as it was in her power to do so.

The du Barry was not slow to guess who had been the cause of this change of front on the part of the dauphiness. She therefore complained to the king, but he objected to interfere in quarrels between ladies of the Court. One day, however, there occurred

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an incident which aroused his anger to such an extent that the du Barry was immediately avenged. The favourite and her arch-enemy were on their way to one of the dauphin's levées, and the Duchesse de Grammont, trying to pass du Barry, stepped on her train in such a manner as to tear it to ribbons. Fortunately for the du Barry, the king witnessed the whole occurrence, sent that same day for the offender, and summarily ordered her to retire from the Court for two years.

The de Choiseuls endeavoured to hush up the matter and to explain the absence of the duchess by spreading the report that she had decided to travel for a while for the

benefit of her health.

The removal of the intriguing sister would doubtless have satisfied the favourite, and she would have been content to leave the minister alone, for, in spite of his opposition to her cause, she had never really entertained the same feelings of animosity towards the Duc de Choiseul as towards the Duchesse de Grammont. What enmity she did display was only pique, and would never have become anything more serious had it not been for the three men under whose influence her pliant nature was as wax.

Maupeon, however, although of course jubilant, as were d'Aiguillon and Richelieu,

at the dismissal of the duchesse, felt that she was still capable of further mischief. Moreover, his main object was to accomplish the downfall of her brother, and he hastened to communicate with the du Barry, informing her that even yet she was not safe from the hatred of the de Choiseul family. Putting forth all their efforts, the three men at last persuaded her to use all her influence with the king to bring about the dismissal of their common enemy.



MADAME DE POMPADOUR
From a painting by Boucher



## CHAPTER X

#### THE DOWNFALL OF DE CHOISEUL

HE following is a copy of the letter which really sealed de Choiseul's fate, for in it Maupeon indicated to the favourite the line she was to take for the attainment of what he was always careful to remind her was their common object:—

#### From Maupeon

5th December, 1770

"MADAME AND DEAR COUSIN,—You have as great an influence over the affairs of Government as if you held the reins of the State in your own hands; therefore, as our interest is the same, we ought to be strictly united, and do nothing but for the public good, in which, as good subjects, our

advantage is concerned.

"We gave the day before yesterday, as you will observe, a little chastisement to the Parliament in recommending that body to be circumspect for the future, but this haughty court, whose ambition aims even at the usurpation of the Sovereign authority, is encouraged by the Duc de Choiseul, its protector. As the Duc de Choiseul is our common enemy, and more yours than he is mine, since you are not safe so long as he continues in place, and as the

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moment is now come when we may rid ourselves of him for ever, let us both be firmly united.

"Let your part be to insinuate continually to His Majesty that Choiseul is secretly stirring up the Parliament to rebel against him. I shall give His Majesty the strongest proofs to confirm what you advance in a slight matter; and I shall show him by papers in my possession, that the Duchesse de Grammont, under pretence of travelling for her pleasure, is endeavouring to stir up the other Parliaments and render them disobedient to his orders.

"The Duc d'Aiguillon and the Abbé de la Ville will artfully give His Majesty to understand that Choiseul, in order to preserve his interest, uses direct methods to bring on a war, though to all appearances he gives in to His Majesty's pacific views.

"This is more than enough to work the ruin of this ambitious minister with our monarch, who at present entertains little regard for him, and keeps him in office only because he is accustomed to him, and, in a manner, against his inclinations, because he fears him and looks upon him as a useful man. This is the line of conduct we are to pursue."

This damning letter had the desired effect. It filled the du Barry with renewed alarm as to the insecurity of her position, and she accordingly played the part assigned to her. She exercised all her arts of fascination to

She exercised all her arts of fascination to such purpose that the *lettre de cachet* which was to terminate the struggle was actually written not once, but many times, only to be destroyed by His Majesty, however, in

# THE DOWNFALL OF DE CHOISEUL

a cooler moment. Nevertheless, it obviously needed only a little more to persuade him to take the step, and, recognising that the du Barry had prepared the way for them to the best of her ability, Maupeon and d'Aiguillon proceeded to carry out the policy at which the former had hinted in the letter just quoted. As this letter implies, one of de Choiseul's chief sources of strength lay in the fact that he had fully convinced the king that he alone was able to maintain that peace which His Majesty so ardently desired. D'Aiguillon and his ally, therefore, put forth all their efforts to explode this theory to which their royal master so tenaciously clung. They circulated a rumour that the duke, in order to render himself necessary, was desirous of exciting a war, even hinting that only de Choiseul could have stirred up the Spaniards to capture the Island of Falkland and take the garrison prisoners; and he it was, they urged, who was unduly prolonging the settlement of this affair.

Louis, acquainted as he was with all de Choiseul's despatches, was cognisant of the fact that his minister did not consider the navy, the army, or the finances of France in a fit state to entertain any idea of entering into war with England; nevertheless, he was flung into a ferment of restless doubt

as to the duke's real policy by the repeated insinuations of d'Aiguillon and Maupeon, who now instructed the favourite to beseech the king, in his own interests and in the interests of France, to question the Abbé de la Ville—the Duc de Choiseul's secretary in regard to the minister's real attitude regarding the affair with Spain. Here, again, personal jealousy and spite played its part. The Abbé de la Ville, though formerly a secretary of embassy, when he had naturally held a post of some responsibility, and had been taken into confidence at the bureau of foreign affairs, had now fallen into the position of a mere clerk to de Choiseul, who made a habit of writing even the most trivial despatches with his own hand. Naturally, the abbé keenly resented this disregard of his person, his advice and his long experience, and had been only too eager to join the cabal that was striving with might and main to accomplish the overthrow of the man who had thus humiliated him.

Madame's earnest request was granted, and, with much ceremony of secrecy, His Majesty summoned the abbé to the council-chamber and interviewed him in the presence of the du Barry. The abbé was commanded to acquaint the king with his own knowledge of the Duc de Choiseul's intentions, and

# THE DOWNFALL OF DE CHOISEUL

replied that he was unable to do this, as the contents of the duke's despatches had not been communicated to him.

However, the abbé suggested, if His Majesty was desirous of learning the duke's real policy in regard to the Spanish affair, he had only to command the duke to write to the King of Spain, informing him that His Majesty was absolutely set upon maintaining peace, and that nothing would induce him to enter into war if it were declared. Then, the abbé proceeded to demonstrate, if M. de Choiseul obeyed without raising any objections, His Majesty might rest assured that his minister desired peace as much as himself; if, on the other hand, he questioned His Majesty's wishes, it meant that he wanted war. Of course, d'Aiguillon's party had been well aware, when they designed this little plan of campaign, that de Choiseul had just despatched a courier to Spain with certain proposals for an agreement; well aware, too, as to what must be the inevitable result of this move.

The king carried out the abbé's suggestion, and was informed by the Duc de Choiseul that it would be necessary to wait for an answer to the proposal he had already despatched, adding that if Spain were averse to the conditions he had put forward, there would be plenty of time to write again.

With the utterance of these words, the duke accomplished his own undoing, and the king regarded them as conclusive evidence of de Choiseul's opposition to his wishes. D'Aiguillon had won the victory; Choiseul and the Parliament were condemned.

The *lettre de cachet*, which we reproduce below, was conveyed to de Choiseul by the Duc de la Vrillière.

"I command my cousin, the Duc de Choiseul, to place his resignation of his office of Secretary of State and Superintendent of Posts in the hands of the Duc de la Vrillière, and to retire to Chanteloup until a further order from me. Louis."

It is very pleasing to note, in connection with the unfortunate minister's dismissal, that he rendered justice to the woman who had in reality played so small a part in his humiliation, and who for so long had persistently endeavoured to win his favour. He was able to appreciate the true facts of the case, and to attribute his downfall to the proper source; therefore we find him, as he is leaving Versailles after the receipt of the king's letter, gallantly bowing and kissing his hand towards the du Barry, who stood at the window of her apartment.

As for the favourite herself, the victory once gained, her position once assured, her kind heart softened immediately, and she

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soon gave the Duc de Choiseul a practical proof of her goodwill. She it was who succeeded in obtaining for him, in spite of the strenuous opposition of d'Aiguillon, a pension of 60,000 livres and a ready-money gift of 100,000 crowns.

# CHAPTER XI

"THE WAGES OF SIN . . . "

Political upheavals at an end for the time being, we next find the king and his mistress settling down in her château at Luciennes, where the favourite prepares to enjoy life after her own manner. At Luciennes we see the old du Barry once more. Here she surrounded herself with every imaginable luxury; beautiful pictures and statues, ornaments of gold and bronze in lavish profusion, wanton extravagance everywhere; in the dress of Madame du Barry and her servants, and particularly in the ludicrously rich attire of her little negro boy, the pet of the household, who waits about her person. With his feathered turban, pink vest and breeches, woolly locks, big white eyes, flat nose and thick, scarlet lips, he proves a great diversion to the ladies.

They all spoil him, and he, in turn, does not forget to take full advantage of the privileges accorded him. There is a story told of how, at dinner one evening, this little imp of mischief caused general consternation by placing on the table a dish swarming with beetles, which he delightedly chased round the room, diving unconcernedly among the laces adorning the corsages of the fair guests of royalty, and screaming with joy when they proceeded to settle in the wig of the chancellor, which he snatched without ceremony from that gentleman's head, that he might amuse himself by catching the wretched little insects with which it was alive!

This one picture is only typical of the atmosphere of utter, licentious abandonment which prevailed at Luciennes. The du Barry, intoxicated by the continuous round of dissipation, is once more a daughter of the people, and drags everyone else down to her own level. The king's liaison was now, in fact, robbed of every vestige of dignity. The veneer of modesty which Versailles had exacted disappeared at Luciennes, and the favourite was no longer the Comtesse du Barry, playing the part of a lady of quality; she was simply Lançon de Vaubernier, and even her speech degenerated into the language of the markets.

She worked terrible havoc with the monarchy. Exercising all the evil influence of the courtesan who is a slave to her instincts, on terms of insolent familiarity with

all, she was as a spoilt child who destroys

everything it handles.

She ruined, and here comes the first hint of that tragedy of tragedies—the Revolution, for which she was largely, though unconsciously, responsible—ruined irretrievably

all respect for royalty.

But justice must be done to this woman who cared not for vengeance; who was incapable of cherishing bitter enmity. Justice must be done to her good qualities, qualities which can only be summed up in that scarcely elegant, but expressive phrase—"a goodnatured wench"—which exactly describes Madame du Barry. Her generosity was wonderful; countless were the favours she bestowed while it was in her power to do so.

For her mother, for whom she always had a most loyal affection, she secured the title of Marquise de Montrable, gave her a lodging in the convent of St Elizabeth, a carriage, a country-house and small farm; she found careers for four of the children of her mother's sister, Madame Quantigny, taking into her own home the youngest daughter, a lovely child, who was popularly supposed to be her own, and whose exquisite little face Drouais painted above the door at Luciennes.

She did not even forget her husband's family. Though her husband only in name,

she procured for Guillaume du Barry an income of nearly 60,000 livres. She married the Roué's brother to Mlle de Fumel, and obtained for him the rank of Captain-Colonel of the Swiss of the Guard of the Comte d'Artois.

Although her doors were closed to the Roué himself, and she refused to see him by reason of the excessive demands he made upon her already lavish generosity, she did not let her disgust at the conduct of the father interfere with her efforts on behalf of his son—the Vicomte Adolphe, whom, with the aid of the Prince de Condé, she married to one of the latter's relatives—a remarkable beauty and wealthy heiress named Mlle de Tournon.

But, already, clouds were gathering on the horizon of the favourite. The king was growing old—being in his sixty-fourth year, and his mode of life had not been such as to enable him to easily withstand the ravages of time. For a brief period, indeed, alarmed by the warnings of his physician, Lamartinière, he lived more quietly, indulging in a sort of platonic liaison with the charming Comtesse de Séran. He soon returned to the favourite, however, and from her passed on to others, utterly abandoning himself to brutish sensualities. By this time his intercourse with the favourite was robbed of all

semblance even of what may be called the

coquetries of modesty.

Thus (save for intermittent periods of pitifully childish remorse, and the performance of religious duties in which he made the participators of his vices share) did Louis XV pass the short time that remained to him on earth.

For some time past, death seemed to have been working havoc among those whom he had been accustomed to see always near him. The Genoese ambassador, Sorba, had died suddenly, and soon afterwards d'Armentière followed him. The Abbé de la Ville, Choiseul's enemy, who had attended the king's levée at Versailles on purpose to thank him for a political appointment the king had just granted him—that of Director of Foreign Affairs—was seized with an apoplectic stroke, and died under His Majesty's very eyes. Lastly, when the king was indulging one evening in a game of piquet with Madame du Barry, the favourite raised her eyes to the Marquis de Chauvelin, His Majesty's old friend and associate, as he leant on the arm of the king's chair, and exclaimed, "M. de Chauvelin, what grimaces you are making!" The king turned to look at him, and Chauvelin fell dead at his feet.

This series of catastrophes, coupled with

a prophecy made by the zealous and fearless young Abbé de Beauvais from the pulpit, had their effect on the superstitious mind of the fast-aging sovereign. The brave young abbé, in his last Lenten sermon, had referred to Solomon of the Bible; and, gazing the while straight down upon the royal pew, had uttered these words:—

"Finally that monarch, satiated with pleasures, wearied through having exhausted, in order to excite his jaded senses, every kind of pleasure which surrounds a throne, ended by seeking a new sort in the vile leavings of public licentiousness." Directly addressing the king, he added impressively, "But forty days more, and Nineveh shall be destroyed."

The king paled visibly; who knows but that he already saw, as in a dreadful vision, the commencement of that ghastly reign of blood which was the price paid by the Bourbons for generation after generation of

wrong-doing.

# CHAPTER XII

#### THE REIGN OF THE FAVOURITE ENDED

HE favourite herself, poor creature, was naturally affected by the intense melancholy which now overtook the king, and was often heard to cry out, before her intimates, "Would that this wretched month of April were over!" It was the month in which the Almanach de Liège for that year had foretold that "a grande dame playing a part at Court shall cease to do so."

The king declared that he would know no rest until the forty days to which the young Abbé de Beauvais had referred, were over. During the last days of April, therefore, feeling that she must do something to distract her master, and to turn his thoughts from the subject of death, du Barry arranged a little pleasure trip to Trianon, where they arrived on the 26th of that fatal month.

The very next day His Majesty, who had attended the hunt, was taken suddenly ill, and was forced to return home in a closed carriage. In the evening he summoned his physician, Lemonier, who, though he found

#### THE REIGN OF THE FAVOURITE ENDED

His Majesty very feverish, intimated to the favourite that there were no alarming symptoms. Thus reassured, she begged the king to remain at Trianon, and let her nurse him back to health and strength, without saying anything of his indisposition to the royal family.

The king consented, but, in the meantime, the news of his illness had already reached Versailles, and the dauphin hastened to despatch the surgeon Lamartiniere to his grandfather's bedside. He was well aware of the influence this doctor exercised over the king; well aware, also, of the fact that

he was an enemy of du Barry's.

Lamartinière, as the dauphin had anticipated, had not the slightest difficulty in prevailing upon the vacillating monarch to return at once to Versailles. He himself superintended the arrangements for the departure, and had the king carefully conveyed to his travelling carriage. Once arrived at Versailles, the king's bed was at once surrounded by the members of the royal family, but, after a very brief interview with each of them, His Majesty dismissed them, and asked for the du Barry, with whom he spent the remainder of the evening.

The next day the doctors, who were still ignorant of the nature of the king's malady,

bled the monarch, which left him terribly weakened and doubtless did much to hasten his death. On the morrow, the 30th of the month, one of the doctors, drawing near to the king with a light in his hand, discovered that a rash had appeared on his cheeks and forehead and then knew at once that His Majesty had fallen a victim to that dread disease—smallpox. It was afterwards discovered that an epidemic had been raging in Trianon at the time of his visit, and the king, in his unsound physical condition, had at once become infected.

Immediately the news became public property, d'Aiguillon's party made a supreme effort, through the medium of Madame's own doctor, Bordeau, to push into the sick-room of the monarch the woman whom he loved, in order that the impression might prevail that the influence she exercised

over him was as strong as ever.

Then began a battle royal round the very death-bed of the king. Du Barry's enemies insisted upon the sacrament being administered, declared there must be an end of what they termed a disgraceful scandal, and called upon Monsieur de Beaumont to follow the example of the bishop who, thirty years before, when the king was thought to be dying at Metz, brought about the dismissal of the woman who was

#### THE REIGN OF THE FAVOURITE ENDED

his mistress at that time, the Duchesse de Chateauroux.

Thus, amid this "jobbing and trafficking in the conscience of the king" (to employ the expression used by the Cardinal de Luynes), we behold the extraordinary spectacle of the devotees and Jesuits of d'Aiguillon's party doing their utmost to prevent the king from receiving communion, whilst the de Choiseul party, the party of philosophers and sceptics, are leagued together in the endeavour to compel the Archbishop of Paris to administer it!

On the 2nd May, the Archbishop arrived from Paris, bringing with him the Sacrament, and asking, in the name of the Holy Church, for the dismissal of the courtesan. But, as a matter of fact, at war with his ecclesiastical conscience was the feeling of grateful recognition of all that the du Barry had accomplished for his party in the removal of the Duc de Choiseul, the elevation of d'Aiguillon, and the abolition of the Parliaments.

Hence it was a comparatively easy matter for the eloquent, convincing Richelieu to win him over to their side. Meeting him at the door of the king's room, the Duke entreated him not to shorten the king's lease of life by troubling him with what he flippantly and characteristically termed "a theological proposition," adding more

seriously that to procure the dismissal of the favourite would be not only to injure the woman who had been their friend, but to render aid to the party who evinced nothing but cynical contempt for the rights of the Church, and would pave the way, in short, to de Choiseul's triumph.

As a final argument, he repeated the words of Madame du Barry, uttered the previous evening. "Let the archbishop leave us alone, and he shall have a cardinal's hat. I will take care of that, and will

answer for it."

The Duc de Richelieu triumphed; the archbishop stayed with the king for about a quarter of an hour, and left his room without having broached the subject of confession.

His Majesty, greatly reassured by the silence of the ecclesiastic in this respect, immediately sent for Madame du Barry, declaring how much better he felt, and embracing her with more warmth and kindness than he had shown her since the beginning of his illness.

Much disappointed for the moment, but still hopeful, the de Choiseul faction next approached the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon. By this time they had also gained the support of others of the more pious clergy, among whom was the Bishop of Carcassonne. The

## THE REIGN OF THE FAVOURITE ENDED

bishop boldly declared that His Majesty must not be permitted to pass from this world into the next without having been anointed. He insisted that the Sacrament must be administered and the courtesan expelled, and pointed out how necessary it was that the king should set a great example of repentance to France and to Christian Europe.

Richelieu was obliged to stand up against the Curé of Versailles, threatening to throw him out of the window if he dared to speak

to the king of confession.

"Unless you kill me," answered the Curé, "I shall go through that door, for it is my

right."

The king's illness, in the meantime, was becoming more and more offensive; day by day he became a more ghastly object, until at last the Archbishop of Paris, breaking with all compromises, unable to still the voice of conscience any longer, revisited His Majesty, and held a long conversation with him.

And, in the evening, when the favourite entered the royal bedchamber, still confident in the strength of the hold she had upon him, His Majesty weakly beckoned her to his side. "Madame," he whispered, "I am very sick; I know what I have to do; I do not want to begin over again the scene at Metz, and therefore we must part. Go to Ruel, to Monsieur d'Aiguillon's, and be

sure that I will always feel for you the

tenderest friendship."

Hardly a moment after the poor favourite had gone weeping from his presence, the king called her name. Then, sinking back exhausted, as he realised she was no longer in the room, he muttered brokenly, in a voice rendered hoarse by growing delirium, "Ah!...she is gone.... We had to part then..."

And the reign of the Comtesse du Barry

is over.

# CHAPTER XIII

THE FLIGHT OF THE COMTE JEAN DU BARRY

JUST one week had elapsed since the dismissal of the favourite. The fatal fortieth day had come, and was drawing to a close. In the window of the royal bedchamber shone a feeble flame, which, once extinguished, would proclaim to the waiting courtiers, who all day long had been straining eager eyes in its direction, that Louis XV had gone to his account.

The watchers had not long to wait; by evening, all was over. The window became suddenly dark, and, immediately, from the rooms where they had been waiting for the end, poured a throng of courtiers, rushing through corridors and down staircases with a noise like thunder, towards the chamber where the new king, Louis XVI, and Marie Antoinette, stood waiting for the news of their accession.

The bearers of the tidings remained only a few moments to make their first obeisances to the new sovereign and his consort, and then hurried away from the palace of death

where lay all that remained of him who had once been the hope of France—Louis the Well-Beloved.

That same night, the body was borne rapidly to the Abbey of St Denis, carried at a quick trot through crowds of jeering Parisians and thrown hastily and irreverently into a vault.

Truly, "the wages of sin is death," and the death of Louis XV was a horrible tragedy. Amid all the revilings, all the cruel insults that were heaped upon the poor dead clay as it was carried with contemptuous haste through the gates of Versailles, there was but one faint gleam of tenderness, one little act of homage. Among the spectators stood a veteran of the old wars; loyally he shouldered his musket, brought his hand to the salute, and murmured, with a suspicion of tears in his voice, "After all . . . he was at Fontenoy!"

"The king is dead! Long live the king!"

"God help us and protect us! We are too young to reign!"

Thus, we are told, began the reign of

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The latter lost no time in carrying out her former threat in regard to Madame du Barry, and the following letter, written by the Comtesse to her mother, is proof of the

#### THE FLIGHT OF DU BARRY

degree of success the Duchesse de Grammont had achieved in prejudicing the then dauphiness against the favourite.

# To the MARQUISE DE MONTRABLE

"Ah, my dear mother, it is all over with us!— The king is no more—It was that scoundrel the Duc de la Vrillière who brought me the news, at the same time delivering me a *lettre de cachet* ordering me to go to Pont-aux-Dames to the convent there.

"I treated him with great contempt. This insolent man, whom I could have yesterday trampled under my feet, seems to-day to triumph in my disgrace. I am sick at the thought of the retreat to which I am condemned, and more so at the manner in which I am to live there.

"I am to be allowed but one woman; I am forbidden to see anybody, and I can receive no

letter without the abbess first examines it.

"I have sent for my steward, and shall give him orders which he will acquaint you with. I beg you will see that he obeys them, and that I am robbed as little as can be helped. I shall write to you, if I am able, as soon as I reach my prison. Adieu, my dear mother! I have so much to do, and am so much agitated in my mind, that I fear I shall leave many things undone."

Madame du Barry was at Ruel with Madame d'Aiguillon when she received the news of her banishment. Still surrounded by a little court, still confident in the ultimate recovery of the king, it is small wonder that the letter

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(which we reproduce below), in spite of the mildness of its tone, filled her with dismay.

#### From VERSAILLES

12th May, 1774.

"I hope, Madame, you will entertain no doubt of the grief I feel at being compelled to inform you that you are forbidden to appear at Court; but I am forced to execute the commands of the king, who charges me to inform you of his desire that you should not appear there until further orders from him.

"His Majesty, at the same time, gives you permission to visit your aunt\* at the Abbey of Pont-aux-Dames, and I will consequently write to Madame the Abbess in order that you may meet with no hindrance.

"You will please acknowledge the receipt of this letter through the bearer, in order that I may satisfy His Majesty that his orders have been carried out.—I have the honour to be, Madame, Your most humble and obedient servant,

"THE DUC DE LA VRILLIÈRE."

But, though she was at first overwhelmed, Madame soon found her temper, and exclaimed, with a few choice blasphemies, "A nice reign, indeed, that starts with a lettre de cachet 1 "

Under these circumstances, now that the reine de la main gauche was dethroned, now that the name of du Barry no longer called

\* Presumably Madame de Quantigny.

# THE FLIGHT OF DU BARRY

to mind the image of a courted, popular favourite, with almost illimitable power, the relations and frequenters of the du Barry disappeared—melted away like snow before the sun. Flight, exile, fear, shame, worked their will, of the whole family; one and all hid themselves and blushed.

The wife of the marquis, Madame de Fumel, put all her servants into dark, unassuming grey, in a sudden access of modesty; in the eager desire to veil her livery and her name.

The Comte Jean du Barry, the Roué, left his Parisian harem and newest favourite; left with all speed the gay city where he boasted of having run through eighteen millions of francs during the reign of his sister-in-law, and stayed not until he reached Lausanne.

Records show, however, that this was only a temporary respite, and that ultimately the guillotine claimed him for its own. Eighteen months after he had succeeded in effecting his escape, the Roué wrote to Monsieur les Malesherbes, a heart-rending letter, in which he deplores his life of wandering from place to place, the ferocity of his creditors, who, not content with selling his movable property, his pictures, which had produced the sum of 400,000 francs, were suing him for further sums; he asked permission to spend a few

days in Paris, to see his creditors, oculists, and doctors, and begged, as a supreme mercy, that he might be allowed to recuperate his shattered health in some southern province.

(Revue de Paris, November, 1836.)

He was allowed to return to Toulouse, where he soon resumed his former gambler's life, and where he continued, until the commencement of the Revolution, to weary Madame du Barry with his exorbitant demands for money, or, failing money, for objects of value with which to calm his creditors.

In '93, less fortunate than du Barry's worthless husband—his brother Guillaume—

he was guillotined at Toulouse.

To do him justice, he died like a brave gentleman, facing death as haughtily as if he were indeed descended from the noble, blueblooded race with whom he had claimed alliance in the days when his star was at its zenith.

# CHAPTER XIV

#### IN RETIREMENT

HE terms of the favourite's lettre de cachet had been too definite to admit of their being misunderstood, and almost immediately Madame du Barry was on her way to Pont-aux-Dames, accompanied by the one waiting-woman the new king had allowed her.

Though she had displayed very real grief on the death of Louis XV, to whom, in her way, she was undoubtedly genuinely attached, the loss of the life of splendour and ease to which she had been for so long accustomed filled her luxury-loving soul with even greater dismay; and the thought of solitary confinement within convent walls, of the monotonous routine and rigid discipline maintained there, was at first well-nigh unendurable.

Once started on her journey, however, her mood, with characteristic suddenness, soon changed; the cloud of despair lifted a little, and by the time she reached her destination she was in a much calmer frame of mind, though the sight of Pont-aux-Dames, fast

falling into decay, was not particularly conducive to cheerfulness. The sombre entrance was suggestive of a prison, and, though her natural optimism had re-asserted itself, Madame could not repress an involuntary shudder as the ghostly cloisters recalled old memories of the unhappy days spent at St Aure.

In a few moments she was climbing the winding-stair to the room where the good Abbess sat waiting to receive her titled guest. She was very kindly welcomed, shown to her little room, and so her new life began.

Naturally, Pont-aux-Dames seemed a most gloomy abode after the extravagant beauty of the château at Luciennes. Little by little, however, Madame got over her first dislike of her uncongenial dwelling-place; she grew accustomed to its severity, its Gothic arches, her own dilapidated apartment, and the service of one single waiting-maid. Often were the weary hours beguiled by the recital of Court anecdotes to a little knot of eager Bernardines, some of them very lovely in their simple but becoming robes of black and white, listening in naïve wonder to her accounts of the doings of the great world.

The kindness of the Abbess, too, softened

The kindness of the Abbess, too, softened the first bitterness of the change for her, and in time, Madame du Barry and Madame de Tournon—the wife of the Vicomte Adolphe

## IN RETIREMENT

du Barry—obtained permission to come and live at Pont-aux-Dames. The poor exile was much cheered by this amelioration of her lot. Encouraged by their courage, their gaiety and their patience, confinement lost all its rigour. After a time, Madame ventured to write to Versailles, requesting the king's permission for her own architect, Ledoux, to visit the convent and make certain improvements, which were absolutely necessary, she declared, to make the place at all habitable.

The king, appreciating the promptitude with which the Comtesse had carried out his orders instead of defying them, as he had been warned would be the case, quite willingly granted the favour. In due course, therefore, Ledoux added to the building a new wing consisting of three very comfortable rooms. In addition, Madame was also permitted to have the same number of attendants to which she had been accustomed. This staff included her female servants, her cook, and a guard, and the Comtesse was always childishly eager to seize every opportunity of loading the Abbess' table and regaling the Bernardines with the dainty delicacies for which her cook was famous.

Nor did her spontaneous generosity end there. She was constantly sending to the city for numerous little gifts for the sisters,

and it was small wonder that she very soon won the affection of nearly every woman in the convent.

She formed so many friendships, her charm of manner made her so universally popular, that she ended by being as content in the convent as in some family where she was the welcome guest.

She was not possessed of that sensitive nature which is overwhelmed by a fall; she had not, in fact, sufficient depth to realise the extent of that fall. The rude awakening from her dream of power did not bring the thousand tortures of humiliation which a loftier soul would have undergone; she accepted her disgrace, after the first sharp sting was forgotten, as nonchalantly as she had accepted her success; she was granted, in short, the consolation of that simple and natural philosophy which to more subtle natures is denied.

Her first despairing cry had been a petulant, vulgar oath; the regrets that followed, a childish fit of the sulks; now all that was over, and the disgrace was as if it had never been.

Since Madame du Barry's departure, many changes had occurred at the Court of Versailles. Not content with being rid of the Comtesse herself, Marie Antoinette had, by degrees, succeeded in banishing nearly all the

## IN RETIREMENT

loyal supporters and in recalling all the enemies of the fallen favourite.

She had communicated at once to the Duchesse de Grammont, as follows:—

"In the midst of all the misfortunes that assail us, it gives me considerable satisfaction to be able to tell you that the king desires you should return to us. Try to come as soon as your health will permit. I shall be only too happy to assure you with my own lips of my friendship for you.

"P.S.—Wait till Madame de la Vrillière sends for you."

Lettres de cachet had been handed to the Duc d'Aiguillon, to Monsieur de Maupeon, and to the Abbé Terray. It was with profound sorrow that Madame du Barry learnt of the downfall of her friends, particularly of the Duc and Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who had extended to her such sincere and practical sympathy on the death of Louis XV. Perhaps with her sorrow for her friends was mingled also a little self-pity, for she felt that in all probability the new ministers would lengthen her own term of exile, and, though she was become wonderfully patient and contented with her lot, she nevertheless longed passionately for a wider horizon-for greater liberty.

However, Fortune was kind to her in this respect. Nearly a year had passed since she

had entered Pont-aux-Dames, and towards the end of that period, as a result of her own petitions and the support of the few friends she still possessed at Versailles, Madame du Barry obtained permission to leave Pont-aux-Dames, on condition that she retired to some place situated at least ten leagues distant from Paris and Versailles.

She then purchased, with the money obtained from the sale of her house at Versailles to Monsieur le Comte de Provençe, the estate of Saint-Vrain, near Arpajon. This was a handsome country mansion situated in grounds covering about 140 acres.

The park, designed on the pattern of an English garden, with thickets of green trees in the Italian fashion, met at first with

Madame's enthusiastic approval.

But, when the pleasant summer months are over, she discovers that the place is unbearable; no longer can she find anything in her picturesque surroundings save a wretched monotony of solitude. No longer does she enjoy the walks through her grounds, the glorious sense of freedom with which her release from Pont-aux-Dames had first inspired her; she begins to pine for her friends, her old habits, society, the world; and above all, for her beloved Luciennes.

# CHAPTER XV

#### RELEASE

N addition to these longings, she was harassed by the ever-present worry of her complicated affairs; the knowledge of her huge debt of 1,200,000 livres

weighed upon her spirits.

Like many another, she would retire to rest at night, her heart aglow with the most noble resolutions, passionately vowing that she would begin at once to re-order her life; she would reduce the number of her servants, do away with show, and introduce everywhere order and economy. But, alas! morning brought the inevitable reaction, and she recoiled in horror from the vows of the previous night and the thought of the upheaval their fulfilment would entail. At last, however, the persistent clamours of her creditors compelled her to open her eyes and to review her financial position seriously. She went closely into figures, and was seriously alarmed by the uncompromising testimony in black and white. She endeavoured to negotiate the sale of the bonds of Nantes which she had

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asked of Louis XV for the Maréchale de Mirepoix, and which the king had given her as a New Year's gift, but she could not effect it.

As a last resource, therefore, she makes up her mind, with a sudden access of virtue born of sudden but complete realisation of the state of her affairs, to still greater sacrifices.

To her notary she submits an inventory (as set forth in Comptes de Madame du Barry) of all the treasures she wishes to dispose of and turn into money; some of the most precious objects of art in her beautiful collection at Luciennes. There are Pollenburgs, Ostades, Teniers, and the pictures brought from Rome by Monsieur de la Borde; there are Vernet's "Four Hours of the Day": two large pictures by Casanova: four large pictures by Vein decorating the oval room at Luciennes: the well-known pictures by Greuze—"The Child caressing a Spaniel": "The Child in its Chemise, playing with a dog": "A Woman in Polish Costume": "A Woman in her Chemise": "The Broken Pitcher": and "The Sketch for the Homage to Love": "The Children of Drouais": four fine pieces of Gobelins tapestry woven by Cozette: marble figures on ormolu pedestals from the drawing-room: the porphyry vases with ormolu bas-reliefs from the central room, and the four torch-

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#### RELEASE

bearers of white marble from the dining-room.

Delivered, by the sale of all these treasures, from her financial troubles, Madame du Barry fell back upon the gloom of Saint-Vrain. She did her best to kill time, devoting her nights to gambling with feverish eagerness; but nothing availed to raise her drooping spirits: her thoughts were ever at Luciennes. In her own words,\* Madame du Barry thus eloquently describes the bitterness of her lot, and the manner in which she obtained her release from her uncongenial surroundings:—

"I had now been long enough at Saint-Vrain to become heartily weary of it, and ardently desired a change. The country is charming, no doubt, in the landscapes of Poussin, Berghem or Claude Lorraine, in poetry and on the stage, but dull and uninteresting to those who are compelled to look on green fields when they sigh for chambers hung with velvet, and, instead of seeing a thousand mirrors reflect their charms, must be content with viewing their features in some running stream.

"In addition to my distaste for sylvan beauties, the damps and exhalations from the marshy ground surrounding my estate engendered a contagious malady, which quickly spread among my domestics.

"My terror of being similarly attacked increased my horror of encountering the frosts and snows of December. I therefore wrote to all my friends,

<sup>\*</sup> Memoirs of Madame du Barry-RILEY.

entreating them to intercede at Court to obtain

my recall from exile, but in vain.

"Hope began to forsake me, when the Duc d'Aiguillon wrote to me from Agen, saying that the Comte de Maurepas\* was much disposed to be my friend, and that a letter to him might do much. If that be all, I said, as I perused the welcome epistle, 'if that be all, I will not be an hour older ere my letter to the Comte de Maurepas shall be on its way to Paris.'

"True to my promise, I seated myself at my writing-table, and immediately despatched the following letter to the Comte de Maurepas:—

'Monsieur Le Comte,—Your own experience of the tedium of an exile may easily dispose you to pity and assist those who are unfortunately similarly situated.

'Upon the death of the late king, I was banished to a convent, under the pretext of preventing my betraying any State secrets. Alas! such has been the carelessness of my life and habitual indifference to all around me, that, even had I learnt any important secret, with my accustomed volatility it would have escaped my recollection the next hour.

'Of all the events of my late rank, I remember but three: the kindness of the deceased monarch, my own unjust behaviour towards the dauphiness, and the generous magnanimity of the queen to

myself.

'Had I been disposed to reveal any of the important matters I am supposed to be so well acquainted with, I could surely have done so as easily at Pont-aux-Dames or my present residence, as at Luciennes or Versailles.

<sup>\*</sup> The Duc d'Aiguillon's uncle.

#### RELEASE

'Now as the reason assigned for my banishment ceases, upon consideration, to be a reasonable motive for depriving a fellow-creature of her liberty, I address you, Sir, to solicit your kind mediation in obtaining of Their Majesties my full pardon. Believe me, your kindness will not be thrown away upon an ungrateful heart.

'I think I may venture to say that the good I endeavoured to do when the power was mine, warrants my expecting to be kindly used in return.

'Besides, your lordship is possessed of too much talent and good sense to look upon me as an object of fear, and too much gallantry to refuse to render any female happy if in your power to make her so.

My request is, to be permitted to reside at Luciennes, with permission to visit Paris without being followed and haunted by the agents of the

police.

'I can assure you, that, however dangerous I may have proved myself to the hearts of some, I am by no means to be dreaded as regards the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom. At any rate, whatever may have been my faults, I have surely been sufficiently punished, and the most just punishment should have its termination.

'To you I look, my lord, as a friend and protector, in that Court which so enthusiastically proclaims your many virtues and excellent qualities.'

"My epistle concluded, I despatched it immediately by a servant of my own, who was to wait at Versailles until M. de Maurepas sent a reply. On the third day he returned, bearing the following letter:—

<sup>&#</sup>x27;MADAME LA COMTESSE,—Your application has

much gratified me. It is not frequently the blooming roses of spring seek the chilling aid of winter.

'Yes, madame, it is indeed time that your exile was ended: your gentleness, and the guarded propriety with which you have conducted yourself have given you just claims on the royal indulgence, and it has been my happiness not to intercede for you in vain.

'You are now free to proceed to Luciennes or

Paris as you prefer.

'Deign to accept my thanks for the flattering sentiments you express.'"

# CHAPTER XVI

#### AN ENGLISH LOVER

ADAME DU BARRY was quite overwhelmed with joy on the receipt of this letter, and she set off for Luciennes without delay. She was delighted to feast her eyes once more on the little park; the splendid trees; the flowers she had planted with the dead king; the gorgeous salons, which, though robbed of many of their treasures, were still things of

beauty.

When she had settled down again in her beloved château, the Comtesse appeared occasionally in the great world she had loved so well. One evening, she had gone to the theatre to witness a performance of one of Voltaire's plays, and her still wonderful beauty had attracted the attention of one of the occupants of the royal box—the brother of Marie Antoinette, Joseph II of Austria, then travelling incognito as the Count von Falkenstein. He made enquiries, and decided there and then to call the next day upon the unfortunate, but lovely woman, who had

made such a profound impression upon him. The royal visit is described by Lady Jackson, as follows:—

"She (Madame du Barry) was informed that the Counts von Falkenstein and Coberzel begged permission to pay their respects to the lady of Luciennes, and to be allowed to walk through the picturesque grounds surrounding the château. Madame du Barry took much pride in her park and grounds. She was accustomed to walk in them daily—often for hours together. They were charmingly laid out in English style, and the fine greenhouses were filled with the choicest and most beautiful flowers—a luxury then only attainable by the wealthy and great.

"The pavilion was a perfect museum of objects of art. Joseph and his friend seem to have been greatly interested in them, and generally well-pleased with all they saw—not omitting the fair

chatelaine herself.

"She was then in her thirty-second year, and still retained, without any tendency to *embonpoint*, the youthful grace of her tall, slight, elegant figure. Powder dimmed not the beautiful gold of her hair, and no rouge disfigured her face. A strange contrast this must have presented to eyes accustomed

to the painted faces of Versailles!

"She now dressed with great simplicity, but always in excellent taste. Leaning on the arm of her imperial guest, she conducted him through those fine avenues of lofty forest trees for which her domain was famous. And when, after spending the greater part of the day with her in admiring the beauties of nature and art, in both of which

#### AN ENGLISH LOVER

Luciennes was so rich, Joseph took his leave, he replied, to her thanks for the honour of his visit to a poor recluse, 'Madame, beauty is everywhere a queen; and it is I who am honoured by your receiving my visit!'

"Cynical as he was, and sometimes even very offensive, yet the Emperor Joseph, when he pleased, could make very gallant speeches and pay very flattering compliments.

"Nowhere does he seem to have shown to so much disadvantage as at Versailles, for all he beheld there was out of harmony with his ideas of what ought to have been. He had a strong presentiment of evil looming in the future for France; he saw that the gloomy horizon was fraught with danger both to her inert sovereign and his thoughtless queen."

At Luciennes, indeed, Madame du Barry reigned supreme, surrounded by a little court of admirers, who were always ready to flatter, and to whom she was always ready to listen. One of the first courtiers of the day was wont to declare that he found no greater pleasure in life than in visiting Madame du Barry, whom he averred was as good as she was beautiful, and who gathered round her all the old friends of Louis XV, charming them all with her unusual natural wit and good-natured gaiety. In fact, the life of "that creature," as Marie Antoinette still disdainfully described her, compared very favourably with the life led by the irresponsible young queen at

Versailles. Moreover, Madame du Barry was far less unpopular with the great Parisian public than was Marie Antoinette, whilst at Luciennes she was universally revered for her extreme benevolence.

It was during this pleasant exile at Luciennes, in this enchanted retreat, that "Monsieur Seymour" entered into her life. With his coming, vanish the gambler of Saint Vrain, the childish coquette; and we find in their place only the loving woman.

A bundle of brief notes reveal to us the story of this short-lived, pathetic "affaire du cœur," and it is only necessary to glance through them to read the secret of her inmost soul, to learn that even this woman, to whom a king had bowed in homage, knew the bitterness of unrequited love.

This romance of Madame du Barry's was as long and commonplace as possible in its beginnings. Her acquaintance with Lord Seymour began when they were neighbours, for he had taken a château between Pont-Marly and Luciennes. In spite of his fifty years, he was still a well-preserved, handsome courtier, with dark, flashing eyes, and a very fine, distinguished presence.

As soon, therefore, as he was installed in his château at Prunay, he speedily became

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much sought after, and made himself

universally popular by giving dances to the peasants, and opening his beautiful park to the public every Sunday.

Madame du Barry and her lady guests joined in the general rejoicings upon the arrival of this new acquisition to the neighbours and the second of the seco bourhood. Madame takes a great interest in Lord Seymour's invalid daughter, and we find her writing to the father as follows:-

"I am very much grieved, monsieur, for the reason which deprives me of the pleasure of seeing you at my house, and I am most sincerely sorry for mademoiselle your daughter on account of the illness from which she suffers; I suppose your heart is as sick as she is herself, and I sympathise with your anxiety. I can only exhort you to take courage since the doctor reassures you as to the danger. If the sympathy I have for you could be of any consolation to you, you would be less disturbed.

"Our journey was very successful. Cornichon \* does not forget you, and constantly talks of you.

"I am delighted if the little dog has given a

moment's distraction to your daughter.

"Accept, monsieur, the assurance of the sentiments I bear to you.

"From Luciennes. Saturday, 6 o'clock."

Gradually her tone becomes more caressing, more tender. The first line of one of her letters reads ;-" It has long been said that small attentions nourish friendship;" and

<sup>\*</sup> The little son of one of Madame du Barry's gardeners, who constantly accompanied her on her drives.

pretty little acts of courtesy confirm the writer's faith in the words. She sends her hero "a coin sorrily squandered over a little game of loto; it is of the time of Louis XIV. Monsieur Seymour is a great admirer of that age so fruitful in marvels; here is a miniature of it which the ladies of Luciennes send him; they spare it because they know well that Monsieur Seymour will count the cost of the sacrifice, and will be convinced that the ladies would like to find more important occasions of marking their friendship for him."

At last come ardent confessions of love.

"The assurance of your fondness, my tender friend," writes Madame du Barry, "makes the happiness of my life; believe me, how long my heart finds these two days, and that did it lie in its power to shorten them, it would soon cease to grieve.

"I shall wait for you on Saturday with all the impatience of a soul entirely yours, and I hope you will lack for nothing. Farewell, I am yours.

"Thursday, two o'clock."

But the course of her true love was not destined to run smoothly for the poor comtesse. Subsequent letters contain reproofs, still gentle as caresses, but obviously her heart is full of sorrow as she writes, full of uncertainty as to the future. One of the letters reads:-

# AN ENGLISH LOVER

"You will have but one word from me, and that would be a reproach if my heart could make you one; I am so tired after the four long letters that I have written that I have only strength left to tell you that I love you.

"To-morrow, I will tell you what prevented me from sending you news of me; but, believe me, whatever you were to say, you would be the only

love of my heart.

"Farewell, I have not the strength to say more to you.

"Friday, two o'clock."

With the last letter, love is dead with Lord Seymour, and the comtesse, treading the valley of humiliation, writes to him:—

# Wednesday, Midnight.

"It is useless to speak to you of my fondness for you, of the wave of tender emotion which surges through my being with every thought of you; you know it. But what you do not know are my sufferings; you have not deigned to reassure me upon that matter which affects my soul. Thus I am compelled to believe that my peace of mind, my happiness, touch you little; it is with regret that I speak to you of it, but it is for the last time. My head is right; my heart suffers. But, with much care and courage, I shall succeed in subduing it; the task will be a painful and difficult one, but it is necessary; it is the last sacrifice which is left for me to make. My heart has made all the others; my reason requires me to make this.

"Adieu, believe that you alone will fill my

heart!"

Thus ended the most passionate romance that, hitherto, Madame du Barry had ever known, and for a long time she was inconsolable.

She locked herself up with her sorrow at Luciennes, living a very quiet life, refusing to receive any but those of her most intimate friends who had been faithful to her through all her troubles, and to whom she felt she could not deny herself.

Time, however, that blessed healer, together with her own lightness of character, eventually cured her even of this love, leaving only a sorrowful memory in her heart. When summer came, she roused herself sufficiently to pay a visit to her brother-in-law, whose regiment was stationed at Bayeux. Every attention was paid to her; the officers gallantly organised numerous fêtes for her amusement, but they all recognised that she was no longer the same gay, frivolous creature they had once known; no longer was she a stranger to grief and suffering.

# CHAPTER XVII

#### THE STORM BURSTS

ROM Bayeux, she returned to Luciennes; her recent sorrow had not soured her happy disposition, but her former irresponsible lightheartedness had given place to a somewhat melancholy, but gentle, unselfish resignation. At last she knew what it was to welcome blessed solitude; no longer did she regret the fleeting joys of the great world she would enter no more.

She lived amongst a few chosen companions, barring alike from her secluded retreat frail women and dissipated gallants, and receiving with respectful grace and that inimitable charm of manner which endeared her to all who knew her, certain illustrious foreigners and princes of Europe who were unwilling to leave France without carrying away with them the memory of Madame du Barry's beauty.

Madame Vigée Le Brun, at that time in the height of her fame, was a guest of the comtesse for several months; in her Memoirs,

she furnishes an interesting account of the life at Luciennes while she was an inmate of the château.

"Madame du Barry had passed her fortieth year. She was tall, without being conspicuously so; just a trifle inclined to stoutness, with a full, well-rounded throat, a very beautiful face, and regular features. Her hair was slightly grey, and curly like a child's, and only her complexion showed signs of advancing age.

"At Luciennes, there was a neglected gallery containing a wonderful assortment of valuable busts, rare pieces of marble and other precious treasures, which led one easily to believe that the apartment had belonged to the mistress of a king.

"These luxuries contrasted strangely with the simplicity of her present life and mode of dress. Summer and winter, Madame du Barry wore only her peignoir robes of thin white muslin, and every day, no matter what the weather might be, she walked out into the park, or beyond its limits, without suffering any inconvenience, so robust had the country life rendered her.

"I do not know why the ambassadors of Tippoo-Sahib felt obliged to visit the mistress of the late king. They not only visited her, however, but brought her valuable presents, among them pieces of costly muslin, richly embroidered with gold; she gave me a gorgeous one, with a large flower pattern with the tints of gold perfectly intermingled.

"In the evening, Madame du Barry and I were nearly always alone, sitting by the fireside. Sometimes she spoke to me of Louis XV and his Court, always with the greatest respect for the one, and

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kind consideration for the other. By both words and deeds she proved herself a good woman; she did a great amount of charitable work in Luciennes, where all the poor received her tender care.

"We often went together to visit some unfortunate person or other, and I well remember her righteous indignation when we called on a poor woman who had just brought a little child into the world, and lacked everything for her comfort.

""What!' cried Madame du Barry, 'you have no wine, no beef-tea, no linen, nor anything?' "'Nothing, madame,' answered the woman.

"We returned to the house, and the Comtesse instantly summoned her housekeeper and the servants, who had evidently failed to execute her orders. Words cannot describe her passionate anger, and she made them hasten to collect, before her eyes, a generous parcel, which she ordered them to take to the sick woman without delay.

"Every evening, after dinner, we went over to the pavilion for coffee, that famous pavilion which was renowned alike for the exquisite taste with which it was furnished, and for the richness and beauty of its decorations. The first time that Madame du Barry showed it me, she remarked simply, 'It was here that Louis XV did me the

honour to dine.'

"There was a gallery for the musicians, who

played and sang during the repast.

"The salon was a most beautiful room; the mantelpieces, doors—all its appointments, in fact were of the most exquisite workmanship, while the furniture was of an elegance that defies description!"

It is somewhat interesting to note the cir-

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cumstances of Madame Le Brun's departure from Luciennes.

Madame du Barry was posing to her talented friend in one of the gardens of the château when she was startled by the distant boom of the cannon which announced the taking of the Bastile and the end of the old régime. The sound so unnerved poor Madame Le Brun that she rushed back home that very day, and did not return to finish the picture. The artist completed it, however, together with another portrait of her friend, some years after the death of the Comtesse.

In the first portrait, at half-length, she is "in a peignoir and straw hat;" in the other, she is "robed in white satin, with a wreath in one hand and one of her arms resting on

a pedestal."

Madame Le Brun's favourable opinion of Madame du Barry was shared by another person of note who saw her during this period of seclusion, the Comte Dufort de Cheverny, who from 1751-64 had occupied the post of introducteur des ambassadeurs. He met Madame du Barry at the house of a certain Don Olavidez de Pilos, a wealthy Spaniard, who had fled to France to escape the horrors of the Inquisition.

It is recorded that Madame du Barry had a "marked veneration" for this victim of

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religious intolerance, and was, "so to speak, at his orders." When, therefore, Don Olavidez intimated to her that he had some friends who were exceedingly anxious to be presented to her, she readily agreed to gratify their desire.

"It was cold enough," says the Comte de Cheverny, in his description of the visit, "to freeze a stone. She arrived alone, in a carriage drawn by six horses. She was tall, extremely well made, and, in short, a very pretty woman in every respect. At the end of a quarter of an hour she was as much at her ease with us as we were with her. My wife was the only other lady present.

"Madame du Barry paid marked attention to my wife and the master of the house, but was pleasant and amiable to all. She bore the brunt of the conversation, spoke of Luciennes, and invited us to come and see it and dine with her. We accepted the invitation, but without naming any

particular day.

"Her pretty face was slightly flushed; she told us that she took a cold bath every day. She showed us that, under her long furred pelisse, she had only

her chemise and a very thin manteau de lit.

"Everything she wore was of such costly material—relics of her former splendour—that I have never seen finer batiste. She insisted that we should feel her petticoats, to prove how little she cared for the cold.

"The dinner was delightful; she told us a hundred anecdotes about Versailles, all in her own style, and she was very interesting to listen to. . . .

"The conversation after dinner took a more

serious turn. She spoke with a charming frankness about the Duc de Choiseul, and expressed regret for not having been on friendly terms with him; she told us of all the trouble she had taken to bring about a better understanding, and said that had it not been for his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont, she would have succeeded in the end; she did not complain of any one, and said nothing spiteful."

But, while Madame was thus living in peaceful seclusion at Luciennes, very different scenes were being enacted in the capital, where the most horrible poverty and general

misery and discontent prevailed.

The winter of 1783 did much to hasten the downfall of Louis XVI and the ill-fated Marie Antoinette. It had been a period of unheard-of suffering on account of the intense cold, which had prevailed for seventy-six days, and the poor wretches who, without work, without food, without shelter, huddled together in the streets of Paris, were driven to desperation by the knowledge that, in the homes of the wealthy and great, unnecessary luxury, even wicked and reckless waste, were the order of the day.

The police had long had their hands full in keeping these poor starvelings in check. Small supplies of hard black bread were doled out to the hungry in some of the public places, and the scenes which took place on

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these occasions were enough to turn the most hardened hearts sick with horror.

Some of the wretched men—irony of ironies!—were employed for a few sous a day in sweeping the snow from the entrances to the wealthy palaces and hotels, and modelling it roughly into huge, uncouth statues, presumably of the sovereign and his consort, perfunctorily raising the while, in a hideous mockery of loyalty, the cry of "Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine!" which was more often than not, however, drowned by the angry clamour of the mob, shouting furiously, "A bas l'Autrichienne!"

This cry, indeed, came to be heard so often, there was such menace in the words, that when the thoughtless Marie Antoinette wished to set off on her sleighing expeditions surrounded by all that paraphernalia of luxury, the sight of which roused the frenzied mob to the most violent demonstrations of hostility, it was deemed absolutely necessary to prevent her from indulging her caprice.

Nevertheless, the end was not far distant. Revolutionary pamphlets were being freely issued, savagely attacking all those who had benefited under the rule of Louis XV, not omitting his mistress, Madame du Barry.

In 1787, sorrow again touched the lady of Luciennes. Her faithful friend, the Duc d'Aiguillon, contracted a fatal illness; her

mother, the Marquise de Montrable (whom she affectionately and liberally provided for up to the day of her death), died two months

after the duke had passed away.

Meanwhile, the clouds on the political horizon grew darker and revolt filled the air. But Madame du Barry knew not the cowardice which flies from the first approach of danger, and, when at last the storm burst, when the deluge, long since predicted by Madame de Pompadour, was well under way, when the Revolution came at last in all its fury, she scornfully refused to leave her country. Moreover, she even refused to hide her wealth, her portraits of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette; to relinquish her title of Comtesse, and with untiring zeal she subscribed to the various aristocratic journals of the day.

# CHAPTER XVIII

#### THE COMTE DE MIRABEAU

MONG the most notable relationships of Madame du Barry was her affaire with the Comte de Mirabeau, and, as it has some bearing on what is to follow, we quote below, from Riley's Memoirs of the Comtesse du Barry, her own account of the liaison:—

"The Comte de Mirabeau, whose country houses were the royal prisons, whose whole life was passed in opposing his father, the ministers, the foreign courts, his relatives, and judicial authorities at home, in one of his excursions to Paris demanded and obtained an introduction to me. I was accustomed to his most extraordinary countenance, and could but wonder how, in the midst of so irregular a life, and more frequently associating with bad company than with good, he had been able to preserve the easy, graceful bearing of one who had never breathed any other air than that of a Court. He was said to be full of insolence towards his own sex, and even gross and disgusting in any excess in which he partook; but with females, no traces of these vices were to be seen, and he had all the passionate devotion and enthusiastic gallantry of an ancient paladin.

"Among the packet of letters which I daily received was one written by some anonymous correspondent, perhaps the thousandth of this description which reached me. I was weak enough to read all these productions, and then to grieve over the insults many of then contained.

"The one to which I allude, however, did not come within this description: it purported to come from 'A friend,' who warned me that the Comte de Mirabeau had wagered with four of his friends that he would, without the slightest effort on his part, make me desperately in love with him without his having the least desire to excite such a passion.

"This intimation amused me greatly, for, although the count had evinced his usual gallantry of manner towards me, there was nothing direct or explicit in his attentions, and I could not imagine why he should seek to inspire me with a sentiment

which was not reciprocal.

"Upon the whole, I looked upon the intelligence as a mere joke, although it filled me with a lively desire to see the count again, that I might be better enabled to judge of the accuracy of my information.

"A week passed away, and M. de Mirabeau did not make his appearance. At last a note, addressed by the same hand as the former, acquainted me that I should receive a visit from the count on the following day, when he would commence his course of seduction. 'Well,' said I to myself, 'it will be my fault should he succeed in his scheme: forewarned should be forearmed.'

"I had not been misinformed; the Comte de Mirabeau arrived on the day mentioned, and I could easily perceive, in the sound of his voice, his glance, and every action, that my correspondent had not imposed upon my credulity. He was more



Madame Vigée Le Brun



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gallant, more assiduous, and, without all at once entering upon the subject of his love, immediately evinced his having now commenced the part he meant to play; his hard-featured face and thick, rough hair, rendered him by no means an object likely to win a lady's heart; besides, I knew his usual habits of libertinism, and how ungratefully he had behaved towards a young and lovely woman, the tale of whose wrongs had reached my ears, and I therefore fully resolved, for every reason, to humour his plot until it should have arrived at completion, and then to dismiss him with the reproof he merited.

"It was not long before I again had the honour of his company, when he more explicitly spoke of love, to my great amusement, for, having the key to this flame, I resolved to fight him with his own weapons; yet, how shall I be able to make myself understood, when I confess that all these wise resolutions melted into air, and I fell as completely into his snares as he could have wished me?

"Alas! often when, listening to his overpowering eloquence, I have raised my eyes to his coarse and deeply-seamed physiognomy, the words of Isabel \* have recurred to my recollection, and I have fully comprehended her comparison of the bird attracted, in spite of itself, by the wily fascination

of the serpent.

"The moment Mirabeau had quitted me, my security returned, and I laughed at the bare idea of yielding to his influence, and, forewarned as I was, I triumphantly defied his power, but no sooner did I find myself in his society than I forgot all the excellent advice I had received, all my own deter-

<sup>\*</sup> An exquisitely-beautiful negress, styled the "Black Venus of Paris," with whom the Comtesse had been on terms of some intimacy.

minations and resolves, and, spellbound, continued to advance into the magic circle marked out for me. None, indeed, but those who have seen or heard this wonderful man when he particularly aimed at pleasing, can form the least notion of his

powers of captivation.

"One day, when he was pressing his suit with an ardour that effectually beat down all my good resolutions, finding myself in danger of being utterly defeated, as a last resource I ran to my escritoire, and drew from thence the two anonymous letters, which, with impetuous haste, I flung before him. He perused them with a calm air, which I deemed somewhat affected, then laying them down, said, with a contemptuous smile, 'May I inquire what is your opinion concerning the contents of these scrawls?'

"That you are a base deceiver, and that I am but too fortunate in having learnt to know it ere

too late to profit by the information.'

"'And these papers teach you all this, do they, Madame? Now then, listen to me. The author of them is one of my oldest, though perhaps not best friends. Madame,' he continued, with a frankness wholly unusual to him, 'at the risk even of forfeiting your regard, I will inform you who is the writer of these letters.'

"So saying, he drew from his pocket-book two papers carefully wrapped up, which I soon recognised as the originals of my anonymous correspondence. These letters were in the handwriting of the count. Surprised, I hastily demanded an explanation.

"'Madame,' said Mirabeau, with the most insufferable coolness; 'I loved you, and wished to gain time that I might inspire you with reciprocal sentiments. You fancied yourself so

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secure in the warning you received, that you quite omitted to take the necessary precautions to defend your heart, and, consequently, gave me all the advantage I desired.'

"'This,' I exclaimed indignantly, 'is a vile

imposition.'

"" Call it a mere ruse de guerre."

"'A positive deception!"

"Mirabeau smiled, and merely answered that, as he had secured his object, it mattered very little

by what means it had been effected.

"No sooner was I left alone than the particulars I had just learnt rose before me in their most offensive light, and I determined instantly to signify to the count my resolve never again to admit him to my presence, but the pen dropped from my fingers; for after all, I said, it was but a venial offence, and I was perhaps to blame to think anything about it.

"On the following day, I received a letter from the count, which I only regret I cannot transcribe here, but I lost it with several others from the same person; many of those of Louis XV; and

various other persons of eminence.

"A servant whom I had recently taken into my service, happening to enter my chamber when I was enclosing in a beautiful cabinet of ivory and ebony several papers of importance and letters I valued greatly, imagined that no doubt the casket contained jewels and other treasures. He carefully observed the place in which I deposited it, and that same night it disappeared, without my being able since to discover any traces of either thief or casket.

"The first letter of Mirabeau bewildered my understanding, the second and third completely

turned my brain. Never did lover express himself with so burning a passion. It seemed as though each line had been traced by a pen dipped in the

fiery lava of a volcano.

"Mirabeau was not the man to employ the ordinary forms of expression, and, in writing as well as speaking, made use of those bold and magical words which now command such breath-

less attention in the assembly.

"Could I then have foreseen that such a meeting would have existed in France, I should easily have pointed out Mirabeau as the eloquent man whose dangerous sophistries would place him at the head of it. Now, his aim is to overturn a throne; but, in the period of which I speak, his ambition pointed but to laying siege to a female heart; and I may as well confess that victory attended his efforts, for, without knowing how or wherefore, I fell a passive victim to this fascinating wooer, with no other distinct idea but that of yielding to a power too superior to admit of resistance.

"One singular thing is that I was the only female on whom Mirabeau bestowed his notice whose name and history he did not publish, but, on the contrary, he seemed anxious to cover our liaison with an air of mystery, and I believe that, had he made known the secret of our connection, he would have converted me into the lawful widow

of the late king of France.

"One of his delights in our private meetings was to make me relate all that I knew of the domestic life of Louis XV. I now sometimes repent of having placed such confidence in him, when I see this powerful enemy of the throne raise his voice in loud and powerful declarations against the grandson of Louis XV."

# CHAPTER XIX

#### AGAIN AT VERSAILLES

NOM the foregoing chapter, it will be seen that the Comtesse could hardly have entertained any real affection for the Comte de Mirabeau, but was merely the helpless victim of the almost hypnotic influence he exercised over her; so that when this liaison came to just as abrupt a conclusion as the rest, she was not left broken-hearted. But, though there was an end of their intimacy, the comtesse and her old admirer met later under strange circumstances—circumstances which proved that her suspicions, occasioned by his hostile attitude towards the reigning monarch, had not been groundless.

Rumours becoming rife that an attack is to be made upon the Palace of Versailles, we find Madame du Barry hastening thither to warn the unfortunate Marie Antoinette.

She was at dinner when news of the plot was brought to her, and, in her own words, she thus graphically describes the situation:

"The people who were dining with me, hear-

ing me remark that it would be necessary for me to withdraw, said farewell. At last I was alone, and free to act.

"I immediately called Georgette, my maid, who closely resembled me in figure, and in whose loyalty and discretion I had the most implicit confidence.

"I donned one of her dresses so as to attract less attention, wrapped myself in a large cloak, ordered my carriage without the coat-of-arms, bidding my coachman dress in ordinary clothes, and drove straight to Versailles.

"Arrived at the gate of the palace, I was as one in a dream, but, summoning my wits to my aid, I told my men to draw up outside the entrance, and, taking the arm of Georgette, I sought

Madame Campan's apartment.

"Only such a quest—only such an errand of life and death—would have led me to Versailles. What memories tortured me as I returned to the scene of my past glory! To see again the palace where, only a short time before, I had sat enthroned by the side of a king and ruled over France! What was I now? A creature lost in the crowd, without credit or influence, yet having it in my power perhaps to save the life of none other than the Oueen of France!

"I was half-surprised at my own daring; certainly, it would have been unspeakable humiliation to me to have been seen thus furtively entering, like a thief in the night, the place where once I had exercised such power; still more should I have resented the inferences which would undoubtedly have been drawn, had I been recognised; but, recognition might also have aroused suspicions of a very different nature, might have resulted in

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the discovery, by one of the conspirators, of my real motive, and this thought it was which made

me tremble.

"Presently this feeling of uncontrollable anxiety vanished, however, and I became calm enough to look about me and notice my surroundings. I observed that many new precautions had been taken for the safety of those within the palace walls; there were more sentinels and a great many more lights in evidence.

"Still followed by Georgette, I glided up the staircase which I knew led to the apartments of

the first lady-in-waiting to the queen.

"My knock was answered by a woman, who, on my asking for Madame Campan, replied that Madame was engaged, and could see no one.

"I told her to let Madame know at once that I was there, and, seeing she still hesitated, I added imperiously, 'Mademoiselle, your mistress expects me, and, if you send me away without notifying her that I am here, I will guarantee that you lose

your position to-morrow!'

"The underlings at Court are accustomed to obey unquestioningly peremptorily-uttered commands, for they immediately conclude that a person who thus addresses them must of necessity hold a position of high authority. As I had anticipated, the words acted like magic. Humbly apologising, the girl begged me to be seated, and flew to seek Madame.

"I had given the name of Cécile Gérard, which was known to Madame as the name under which I conveyed to her secret information, and I speedily found myself in her presence. Retiring to a corner of her apartment, where we could remain unob-

served, I told her all I heard of the terrible plot, and words cannot describe the impression it made upon her. Then I bade her farewell, she accompanying me as far as the courtyard, where we separated, I to regain my carriage, she to warn

His Majesty.

"As I was crossing the courtyard, I met a man enveloped in a cloak which he obviously wore more for the purpose of disguise than as a protection from the cold. I should have passed him without taking any particular notice of him, had I not recognised in his walk the peculiar gait of the Comte de Mirabeau, and I trembled lest he should recognise me. As ill-luck would have it, a gust of wind blew my cloak from my shoulders, and he caught sight of my face.

"What are you doing here?' he asked, in

evident surprise.

"'I was about to ask you the same question,' I replied evasively.

"Do not waste words, Madame; once more,

what are you doing here?'

"'Perhaps, Monsieur le Comte,' said I, forcing myself to smile unconcernedly, 'my errand is the same as in former days.'

"It is possible. Women are capable of any-

thing. However-'

"'And you,' I interrupted. 'How strange that the champion of the people should be wandering disguised about the palace which is being daily attacked by him!'

"'Ah! I imitate you. 'Tis love—'
"'You lie, Monsieur le Comte!'

"'That word can cause a duel, Comtesse.'

"I do not fear you. You are more fond of barking that biting."

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"The Comte laughed; it is the best plan when one does not wish to get angry!

"'I shall be revenged,' said he. 'I shall relate

where I saw you.'
"'And I,' I retorted, 'shall relate whom I met.' "'That will do neither of us any good,' he said. 'Let us agree to be silent.'

"'I was about to proffer the same suggestion," was my reply, and we shook hands on the bargain.

"Adieu, said the Comte. I guess the motive of your visit; it is honourable treason, but it will eventually avail nothing. The plot will one day be too well laid to fail on account of unwise con-

fidences from a pretty woman.'

"With these words, which filled me with the most disquieting presentiment, we separated. The Comte de Mirabeau never visited me again, but he remained silent, as I had full proof in the fact that his friends still came, and, though they talked freely, no reference was made to our strange rencontre."

# CHAPTER XX

# LOVE'S PENALTY

her had power to diminish the zeal of the Comtesse du Barry. We find her old enmity towards Marie Antoinette vanishing completely; her heart contains nothing but the most tender pity and solicitude for this most unhappy queen. The following letter should gain much indulgence for the memory of Madame du Barry. It was written in reply to Marie Antoinette's expressions of gratitude for the kindness and tender care the Comtesse had lavished on the wounded, to whom she had thrown open, with her customary eager, unhesitating generosity, her beloved château at Luciennes.

"The wounded young men have no other regret save that they did not die for a princess so deserving of all homage as is your majesty. The little I have done for these brave men is far below the level of their deserts. I console them, and I respect their wounds, when I reflect, Madame, that without their devotion, your majesty would, perhaps, be no longer in existence.

"Luciennes is yours, Madame; was it not your kindness which restored it to me? All that I

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possess comes to me from the royal family; I am too grateful ever to forget it. The late king, with a sort of presentiment, forced me to accept a thousand precious objects before dismissing me from him. I have had the honour of making you an inventory of these treasures; once more, Madame, I offer them to you with eagerness.

"You have so many expenses to meet, and benefits without number to bestow. Permit me, I entreat you, to 'render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's'."

Thus were the two former rivals united by the common bond of suffering in these troublous times.

But it was not so much her brave and open loyalty which served to hasten the tragic end of Madame du Barry. Love had been the key note of her existence; love had raised her to a throne, and love it was that largely accomplished her undoing.

Amongst the fatalities which marked her out for death, was her *liaison* with the noble Duc de Cossé-Brissac. In this brave gentleman we see the embodiment of all the most noble and polished gallantries of the proud,

chivalrous courtiers of Old France.

There must have been much that was lovable and admirable in the character of the ex-courtesan to have enabled her to win the hourly devotion—nay, more, the profound respect, offered on bended knee—of such a man as the Duc de Brissac.

It is small wonder that he awakened the

best in her; that, during the last days of her life, a woman worthy of such a love is revealed to us; a woman whose tone is one of decency and dignity; a woman equally devoid of humility and pride, licence and prudery; a woman with her beautiful face ennobled by the one pure love of her life; a love sanctified by that bond of genuine sympathy which united the souls of these two lovers, both in the autumn of their lives.

It is small wonder that the Comtesse, fickle and inconstant as she was, transferring her affections from the king to the Duc d'Aiguillon, and from d'Aiguillon to Lord Seymour, should nevertheless have reciprocated to the full, should have been intensely grateful for this worshipping adoration—this last great love of her life.

The story of M. de Brissac's passion—the passion of this most devoted servant of royalty for the banished favourite, was

common property at Court.

In the first days of the Revolution the liaison had aroused distrust and suspicion, and numerous spies had been set to watch Luciennes, which was nightly visited either by the duke himself, or by his aide-de-camp, Maussabré, who was deeply attached to him. Slowly, but none the less surely, the in-

creasing unpopularity of the duke enveloped Madame du Barry, in whom the revolutionaries

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saw a powerful accomplice, the accomplice of this dangerous aristocrat who was recruiting the Constitutional Guard of the king, of which he was Commandant, and with which he hoped to fight the last battle of the monarchy.

But his fondly-cherished hopes were rudely shattered, and, on the 29th May, 1792, the blow fell. De Brissac was indicted before the National High Court of Orleans. After an hour of the most ridiculous discussion, in the course of which a report was laid before the Assembly to the effect that a large proportion of the Garde du Roi had been enlisted without any observance of the usual formalities. Some of them, it was affirmed, had not put in the necessary term of service, while others had not even taken the oath of allegiance before their nomination.

During the farcical debate which followed, a speech was made by M. Couthon, which

we reproduce below :-

"This is the moment when the Assembly should realise its responsibilities, and determine to perform its proper functions. This is the moment when it should strike at the root of the present evils—should endeavour to discover the source from whence emanate the conspiracies that are afoot throughout the empire. And what methods shall it pursue? Where shall we seek their birthplace? There—in the Château of the Tuileries! The Garde du Roi is no better than a crowd of brigands! I propose, therefore, that we try to remedy this

deplorable state of affairs by accusing the Duc de Brissac, the Commandant of this Guard."

The following motions were then carried:—

(1.) That the Garde du Roi should be disbanded.

(2.) That it was imperative it should be entirely reorganised according to law.

(3.) That the National Guard should take its place until this reorganisation was effected.

On this trumped-up charge, therefore, did the Assembly convict the Duc de Cossé-Brissac.

The Gazette de Paris commented on the disgraceful proceedings in the following terms:—

"Never, surely, have there occurred in one single day such atrocities, such calumnies, such a violation of all laws, both human and divine!

"Monsieur de Brissac has been accused! Yesterday, at six o'clock, this brave and loyal gentleman was taken to Orleans, a vile crowd following his

carriage and heaping insults upon him.

"The day will assuredly come when the world will demand in amazement what was the reason for this gross injustice, will marvel how this crime, this condemnation of a blameless chevalier by men who had not even heard his defence, who had not, in fact, been able to formulate any real charge against him—could ever have been permitted by the French nation.

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"At the Constitutional Guard, also, which has been organised under the new régime, was hurled the unreasoning, ungovernable fury of the insane mob, and their condition was so pitiful that it brought tears to the eyes of many of the spectators.

"The National Guard managed to shield with their bayonets this banished body of stalwart, devoted servants of the king, whose only crime has been to stand between their monarch and the daggers of the regicides."

Although the king and queen, on hearing of the duke's conviction, had immediately taken steps to provide him with the means for flight, Brissac, instead of escaping, had thought only of writing a long letter to his

beloved Comtesse.

During his confinement, he wrote daily from the prisons of Orleans: long, ardent love letters which were carried to Luciennes by the faithful Maussabré: letters brimful of pathos, of passionate adoration, and tenderly-expressed anxiety for her welfare: letters into which Monsieur de Brissac put all his heart before he died beneath the knife of his butchers.

These last messages of love were referred to in the journals as anti-revolutionary correspondence, and after the 2nd September, 1792, they even went so far, either from impatience or foresight, as to insert lying statements to the effect that Madame du Barry had been arrested for having participated in the revolu-

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tionary projects of her lover! The number of his messengers to Luciennes, they averred, and the frequency of their visits, precluded all possibility of their being merely the ambassadors of love.

After the 10th August, a band of Marseillais arrested Maussabré at Luciennes, where he had been concealed in a cupboard by the lady of the château. He was carried off before the eyes of the agonised Madame du Barry, who had fondly imagined that the soldiers would never succeed in discovering the hiding-place she had pointed out to her faithful friend.

He was removed to Paris, and imprisoned in the *Abbaye*, where he eventually perished, together with many other unfortunate victims immured within its walls.

Soon after Maussabre's imprisonment, news of the Duc de Brissac's death and the imprisonment of the king and the royal family reached the sorrowing Comtesse.

Though nothing could be accounted improbable in those days of indescribable horrors, we can only hope that the statement published in the Courier Français was untrue, for in this journal it was recorded that, after the massacre at Versailles, in which the Duc de Brissac was killed, the head of Madame du Barry's lover was brought to the Château of Luciennes, and thrown contemptuously

### LOVE'S PENALTY

through the drawing-room window, the ghastly object falling at her very feet!

But, though this report may have been a hideous falsehood, certain it is that the blood of Brissac marked her out for death, and from the time that the revolutionary press, in commenting on this latest murder committed in the name of justice, associated the duke's name with that of the lady of Luciennes, the fate of Monsieur de Cossé-Brissac threatened also the woman he had loved better than life.

Ever mindful of her welfare, she had occupied the first place in his thoughts up to the very day of his death, and we find him thus recommending her, in his will, to his daughter, Madame de Mortemart.

"I warmly recommend to you a person who is very dear to me and whom the misfortunes of the time may bring to the greatest distress. My daughter will find a codicil by me which will inform her of my commands on this matter."

This codicil is couched in the following terms:—

"I give and bequeath to Madame du Barry, of Luciennes, above and beyond what I owe to her, an annual income of 24,000 livres, free and exempt from all deductions, or else the usufruct and enjoyment during her lifetime of my estate of La Rambaudière and La Graffinière in Poitou, and the appurtenances thereof, or again a sum of 300,000 livres in ready money down, all at her choice, it

being understood that when once she has decided upon any one of these three legacies, the two

others shall be considered refused.

"I beg her to accept this feeble mark of my sentiments and gratitude, which I owe to her all the more in that I was the involuntary cause of the loss of her diamonds \* and that if she ever succeeds in obtaining them from England, those she is unable to recover, or the cost of the various journeys that the search for them has rendered necessary, as well as that of the reward to be paid, will be equal in amount to the actual value of this legacy. I beg my daughter to make her accept it.

"The knowledge I have of her heart reassures me as to the punctuality with which she will acquit it, whatever be the charges which will be laid upon my inheritance by my will and codicil, my wish being that none of my other legacies

be paid until this is completed.

"(Signed) Louis Hercule Timothéon de Cossé-Brissac."

That his daughter loyally fulfilled her trust may be gathered from the following correspondence:—

"No one has felt more than myself, Madame, the extent of the loss which you have just sustained, and I trust you will not be under a misapprehension as to the motive which has prevented me from paying you the sad compliment of mingling my tears with your own before this.

"The fear of augmenting your justifiable grief prevents me from speaking to you of it. Mine is

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complete; a life which ought to have been so great, so glorious! What an end! Grand Dieu!

"The last wish of your unhappy father, Madame,

was that I should love you as a sister.

"This wish is too much in conformity with my

heart for me not to fulfil it.

"Accept the assurance of it, and never doubt the affection which attaches me to you for the rest of my life."

# To this letter the Duchesse replied :-

"I received your letter this morning. Accept my thanks for the good you have done me. You have lessened my anguish and brought tears to my eyes. Many times I have been ready to write to you and speak of my grief; my heart is rent broken. Ever since the fatal day on which my father left Paris I have suffered, and I still suffer more than I can express. But I judged it wiser to wait until I could contain some of my feelings. I must open my heart to you, who alone are able to realise my grief.

"I am eager to fulfil the last wishes of him whose memory I cherish and whom I shall mourn for ever. I will indeed love you as a sister, and my attachment to you will end only with my life. The least of my father's wishes is to me a sacred

command.

"If I could only obey every one of the desires he had, or must have had, in his last moments, I would spare nothing to do so.

"Pardon my scribble. My head aches so that

I cannot see.

"Deign to accept, Madame, the expression of my everlasting affection."

# CHAPTER XXI

#### A ROBBERY

N spite, however, of all the danger that thundered at Madame du Barry's feet, Death had his hands so full that in all probability the black clouds that were fast gathering over France might have passed over Luciennes, the revolutionary earthquake might have spent its terrific force without making itself felt in the little château where the beautiful survivor of the Court of Louis XV was passing the remainder of her days, had it not been for one of those comparatively unimportant occurrences which alter the whole course of a life.

It happened that on the 10th of January, 1791, while Madame du Barry was visiting the de Brissac family, her château was broken into by a band of thieves, and a vast number of her diamonds and other precious stones were stolen.

Madame du Barry's jewel-cases were kept in the ante-chamber leading to her bedroom. A soldier belonging to the Suisses Rouges, quartered at Courbevoie, was on guard

### A ROBBERY

outside the chateau during the night; and before leaving home the Comtesse had given orders that, in the event of her staying overnight at the Hôtel de Brissac, the gardener was to sleep in the ante-chamber. As, however, it was not easy to put up a bed in this room, Morin, her valet de chambre, had taken upon himself to dispense with the attendance of the gardener, while the robbers had taken the precaution to entertain the Swiss at a neighbouring cabaret, with the result that he became temporarily unfit for duty. Then, with the aid of a ladder which had been left near the house, they mounted to the window of the antechamber, broke the outside shutters, cut out a pane of glass, opened the window, and ransacked the room at their leisure.

Naturally, on hearing of her loss, Madame du Barry made every endeavour to recover her valuables, and unfortunately, as it afterwards proved, she took the jeweller Rouen into her confidence. He, over-zealous for his client, in an ill-considered moment was foolish enough to have all the walls of Paris placarded with a lengthy, detailed description of Madame's stolen property, the bills being headed with the magic words, "TWO THOUSAND LOUIS TO GAIN!"

And this happened at a time when the most awful misery, the most abject poverty

prevailed; cold and hunger, combined with the teaching of the demagogues, the insidious, inspiring eloquence of "patriots," were rapidly driving the frenzied masses towards that primitive, instinctive remedy of nature for social ills—anarchy.

Before the eyes of men and women suffering from the want of the bare necessaries

of life the placards announcing this huge reward were flaunted. Having nothing else to do, poor souls, they found plenty of time to read the contents, and to discuss among themselves this incredible number of diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, rubies and pearls. And, while they talked over this wonderful wealth, while they marvelled how it was that one solitary human being could have been so fortunate as to possess all this treasure while they themselves went half-naked, and starved with hunger, they began to remember who and what this woman (who, during the fifteen years of her retirement at Luciennes had been almost forgotten), once had been.

They were familiar with the reports, doubtless grossly exaggerated, which had been in circulation during the reign of the favourite, as to the manner in which Louis XV had been wont to cover the body of his mistress with diamonds, and how he had delighted to please her by giving away to

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her impecunious relatives basketfuls of louis d'or, while the peasantry perished of hunger and cold.

They doubtless cherished, also, their own vaguely-formulated ideas as to the injustice of the social system which permitted such a state of affairs. And now, in these days, they were constantly hearing of the abominable wastefulness, the wanton extravagance which prevailed at Versailles while the starving poor clamoured for a crust of bread at the very gates of the palace.

All these pictures had been crudely, but none the less vividly presented to them by their passionately-eloquent if half-educated orators, on whose words the mob hung in speechless admiration, even while they perhaps only half-believed their doctrines, perhaps failed entirely to comprehend the significance of it all.

Small wonder, then, that into the eyes of these desperate ones flashed an expression of furious envy, of sudden realisation of all their manifold grievances, as they took in the description of these gorgeous

jewels.

It seems almost incredible that a levelheaded man of affairs like Rouen should have taken this fatal step for the recovery of his client's property, should have placarded the streets with such an incendiary document,

apparently with no thought whatever of what

might result.

It only shows how little, and this in spite of the fact that the Revolution had already begun, even intelligent people realised the terrible state of affairs that existed.

We give below the article which appeared at the time in the Revolutions de Paris,

against Madame du Barry:-

"Since the Revolution, the woman du Barry has not ceased to make use of all the influence which is given her by great wealth, how acquired we all know, in order to promote a state of illfeeling between the inhabitants of Luciennes and the Swiss of Courbevoie. Her secret schemes, carried on in concert with the leading officers, have not had the desired success; quite on the contrary, people are impressed so far from favourably with the mistress of the Château of Luciennes that they are not afraid to raise a doubt as to the reality of the theft of her diamonds. The formidable reduction which threatens the revenues of the said lady inspired her with the idea, it is said, of making herself interesting, by giving herself out as the victim of a distressing event, and thus procuring herself a title to the indulgence of the inexorable National Assembly.

"However that may be, her conduct in the situation she professes to hold, is hardly calculated to excite pity for her. The said lady gave very respectable wages to a Swiss soldier to serve her as door-keeper at Luciennes. The present custodian is a young man of eighteen, of a most frank and

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amiable appearance. On the news of the disappearance of the precious stones, the first proceeding of the mistress of the château was to betake herself in a carriage drawn by four horses to the commander of the Swiss at Courbevoie; she had no difficulty in obtaining from him fifty grenadiers, who came promptly but regretfully to seize the person of the young Swiss, who was generally esteemed and beloved by his comrades. He was escorted to the prison of Ruel, where, at the same time, orders were given to cast him, in irons, into the darkest of the dungeons.

"We have all these facts from the mouth of a Swiss of Courbevoie, an open young man, who informs us, at the same time, that all the company of the prisoner proposes, when relieved from military discipline, to take the woman du Barry to task, and ask her to justify the violence employed at her solicitation upon the person of a soldier,

who was, at the most, suspected.

"The theft of the diamonds of Golconda would not justify this infringement of the rights of the

man and the citizen.

"Is there, moreover, any offence so grave as to allow of a man being put into irons upon the mere suspicion of a woman still proud of having been, for a moment, the first courtesan in the kingdom?"

On the 16th February, just about a month after that visit to the Hôtel Brissac which had been the indirect cause of Madame du Barry's misfortune, five men entered the shop of a certain rich London lapidary, named Simon, and aroused his suspicions by offering to sell him a quantity of the most

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beautiful precious stones for a sum which he at once recognised as being only about one-sixth of their actual value. He purchased them for £1500, and, on learning from his strange visitors that they possessed other stones of still greater value they would like to dispose of, he promised to make an offer for them also, and then quietly proceeded to acquaint the authorities with the whole affair. That same night the men were placed under arrest; the bulk of their booty was recovered, and news of the discovery sent as soon as possible to the Comtesse du Barry.

She, overjoyed at the news, speedily took her departure from Luciennes, and, arrived in London, was shown the jewels, and identified them, declaring under oath that they were her rightful property.

# CHAPTER XXII

#### A NEW ENEMY

HE English law, however, as Madame du Barry discovered to her cost, moved exceedingly slowly. Many elaborate legal formalities had to be gone through before she could recover her jewels, and she was compelled to return to France without them, leaving them in the care of her bankers, sealed with their seal and her own.

She departed on her second journey to London on the 4th April, this time accompanied by the jeweller Rouen, and remained there until the 21st May, only to be again doomed to disappointment; once more she returned without her property.

Two days later the receipt of a letter made her set off in haste, but she returned, emptyhanded, and much cast down by the tediousness of English law processes, on the 25th

of August.

It was after this last return from her fruitless quest, she learnt that the National High Court of Orléans had entered upon its

functions, with what result we already know. The new method of beheading prisoners by the guillotine was adopted at this time, and the battle of the Revolution waxed fiercer day by day; day by day the work of the

executioner grew heavier.

In the following October, Madame du Barry set off once more to London, returning in March, 1793. Some writers are of opinion that possibly these journeys, particularly the last, had in reality a political aim; that Madame was in the service of a party; but this theory is hardly reconcilable with her absolute indifference to politics and

her natural lightness of character.

Doubtless all her crimes against the Revolution were simply loans, monetary services, generous charities, the spontaneous outcome of that tender pity which had so quickly changed her heart towards Marie Antoinette.

Be that as it may, however, certainly the suspicions of the Revolutionists were aroused, for during her visits to England, when she was much sought after by many of the most eminent men in the kingdom, all her movements were watched and their own construction put upon them by the tools of her enemies at home.

During her last visit the Revolution had gained terrific headway, and Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had perished on the scaf-

### A NEW ENEMY

fold. One of the du Barry's noted English admirers, William Pitt, begged her most earnestly to spend the remainder of her life in England, for well he knew the terrible risk she ran in returning to her own country at such a time; a time when the nation was mad with hatred for the old monarchy and

everything connected with it.

But Madame du Barry, fully confident that she would find loyal and ardent supporters in Luciennes, would not listen to this wise counsel. She knew that she had left the peaceful community, but a short time before, undisturbed by the revolutionary outburst which was shaking her country to its very foundations; she knew that nearly every inhabitant owed her a personal debt of gratitude, and unhesitatingly, therefore, she returned to her beloved château.

During this last absence, however, a certain zealous demagogue named George Greive, who was a great friend of Marat's, and was actually to have dined with that "patriot" on the day Charlotte Corday rid the world of his presence, had taken up his abode in the quiet village of Luciennes, and had scattered his doctrines broadcast among its simpleminded inhabitants. This worthy described and signed himself as follows:—

"Official defender of the brave sans-culottes of Luciennes; friend of Franklin and Marat;

factionary and anarchist of the first degree; and for twenty years disorganiser of despotism in both hemispheres."

Marat had always detested Madame du Barry, and it is highly probable, therefore, that at some time or other he had suggested her to Greive as a woman whom it would be easy to get rid of, and whose enormous wealth would sufficiently recompense her destroyer for his trouble.

Greive, therefore, had seized the opportunity afforded by Madame du Barry's temporary absence of approaching the people of Luciennes, and he soon succeeded in persuading these confiding souls that she had deserted them, and had turned *emigrée*.

This libel having got abroad, and become accepted as fact, the first steps had been taken for the confiscation of her property, and, on her return in the March of 1793, Madame du Barry found to her amazement that seals had been set upon the door of her château, and, in order to secure their removal, she was compelled to draw up the following remonstrance to the administrators of the district of Versailles:—

# "ADMINISTRATING CITIZENS,

The citizen Vaubernier du Barry is much surprised that after all the undertakings she gave you for the reasons which forced her to go to England, you should have treated her

### A NEW ENEMY

as an emigrée. Before her departure, she communicated to you the declaration which she had made to her municipality; you have registered it in your offices; you know that it is the fourth journey she has been obliged to make-always for the same motive.

"She hopes that you will cause the seals to be removed which have been affixed to her doors against all justice, since the law has never forbidden those whom private and urgent business summons

to a foreign country to leave the kingdom.
"All France has heard of the robbery of which she was the victim on the night of the 10th and 11th January 1791; they know that the thieves were arrested in London; that there was a regular trial, and that the final judgment was not given until the 28th February last, as the enclosed certificate attests.

"Luciennes, this 27th day of March 1793."

# CHAPTER XXIII

#### TREACHERY

A LTHOUGH he had been defeated in his first attempt, Greive was fully confident that he would ultimately attain his object. He had a very useful tool in the person of a certain Blache, one of the Revolutionary spies, who, masquerading as a professor of the French language and a poor emigré, had dogged the footsteps of the unsuspecting Madame du Barry (who had befriended him with characteristic kindness of heart) during her sojourn in England.

These two conspirators also found ardent supporters in three ingrates who, for years, had received nothing but kindness at the hands of Madame du Barry; Salenave, her ex-steward; Frémont, her former gardener; and the treacherous Zamore, whom she had treated almost as a son; who still retained the post of Governor of Luciennes, to which he had been appointed by Louis XV, but who, with the first two, was in secret league against his mistress; plotting in the shade,

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spying upon every action of the du Barry; his greedy eyes alight with covetous envy, fixed upon the property of his benefactress.

Relying upon the aid of Blache, therefore, Greive proceeded to make his next move; he drew up an address to the administrating citizens, approached the Luciennes Club, and, after a little eloquent persuasion, succeeded in obtaining the signatures of its members.

A deputation, headed by himself, Blache and Salenave, then proceeded to Versailles to present this precious document, which read as follows :-

"The good citizens of Luciennes have deputed us to call your attention to the perilous condition of the country, and to inform you of the causes for anxiety. Our city, its environs—the whole district, in fact, is in a most deplorable state of unrest.

"It is necessary to take strong measures, and we therefore beg you to publish the decree issued by the Convention of the 2nd June, declaring 'that the authorities throughout the whole extent of the Republic shall be required to seize and put under arrest all persons notoriously suspected of being aristocrats and bad citizens.'

"Rest assured that our hearts and our arms are

devoted to the public service.

"Signed by thirty-two citizens,

"Luciennes, 26th June 1793."

The Commune, after reading this address,

agreed that it was "necessary to take strong measures;" a list was drawn up of persons to be arrested, and at the head of the list was

placed the name of Madame du Barry.

The Comtesse, however, informed of the whole occurrence, had at once despatched her valet-de-chambre, Morin, together with the Chevalier Labondie, to interview several influential members of the superior adminis-

trations, and to plead her cause.

When the triumphant Greive, therefore, accompanied by the mayor and municipals whom he had won over, arrived in haste at the château, all eagerness to accomplish the arrest of its unfortunate mistress, he was met by the citizen Boileau, the district member.

There and then, Boileau called an assembly of the municipality, and reprimanded them severely for having been so precipitate in the execution of a decree which, he observed, "we were going to send back to you with restrictions and modifications."

Madame du Barry was then gallantly escorted by the district member back to her

pavilion.

The relentless Greive, however, was not discouraged. He drew up another address, and got it covered with the signatures of his accomplices—all members of the club—a great many of whom had been the recipients

### TREACHERY

of countless favours from the woman they

were now hounding to death.

On the 3rd July, he conducted the mayor and municipals to the bar of the Convention in order to read this new address, dated 1st July 1793, year II of the Republic:—

"The brave sans-culottes of Luciennes," said Greive, in this chef-d'œuvre of perfidy, "congratulated the Convention on the wise, beneficent and popular decrees it had issued since the immortal insurrection of the 31st of May. . . . decrees had revived the sacred fires which had been well-nigh extinguished by the icy influence of moderate ideas. The sans-culottes of Luciennes had just commenced their operations by the arrest of a woman, who, in spite of relations notoriously anti-civic, owing to her wealth and the caresses she had learned at the court of a weak and crepulous tyrant, had been able to escape the declaration of the rights of man; a woman who had made her château the centre of the liberty-destroying projects against Paris; begun by Brissac, continued by the aristocrats of all shades with whom she was in perpetual correspondence; a woman whose luxury insulted those unhappy women whose husbands, fathers, brothers and sons were shedding their blood for equality in our armies. The arrest of this woman, already too notorious in the history of our monarchy, was indispensable, in order to destroy the vestiges of a false grandeur which fascinates the eyes of the good and simple countryfolk, and to put in practice the neglected principles of equality."

"We ask," said Greive, "that this address

may be printed, in order to stir up the other

communities of the department."

To this cunningly-conceived document, the President of the Convention, Thuriot, replied:

"The National Convention applauds the fresh proofs which the Commune of Luciennes has just given of its patriotism, which has been recognised ever since the beginning of the Revolution, and which it manifests at this moment by desiring to put in execution (in the case of a woman over-long celebrated, to the misfortune of France) the law of the 2nd June.

"The facts of which you have just denounced her are too grave; rest assured that if they are proved, her head will fall upon the scaffold."

Encouraged by the approbation of the Convention, Greive and his friends returned to Luciennes, arrested the Comtesse, and conveyed her to Versailles to be imprisoned in the departmental house of arrest. This time, they were fully determined not to be thwarted in their intention, and they calmly ignored the remonstrances of the syndical-procurer, Goujon. In vain did the latter indignantly assert that it was an act of infamous injustice—that the arrest had been effected in direct opposition to the wishes of the inhabitants of Luciennes. In vain did he deny the truth of the facts alleged against Madame du Barry, which he declared to be

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terribly exaggerated and devoid of proof. Though he complained bitterly of the despotism exercised over the surrounding communes by the Luciennes Club; though he threatened to make them tremble, Greive and the club obstinately held out.

Meanwhile, Madame du Barry, having been apprised of the facts alleged against her, had a counter-address composed, and this was speedily covered with the signatures of all those inhabitants of Luciennes who were

hostile to the club.

This counter-petition, addressed to the Committee of General Safety, was presented on the 6th July, was duly deliberated over, and it was finally decided that Madame du Barry had right on her side. The justice of her claim that she was innocent of the charges brought against her was allowed, and once more the Comtesse was saved. She was sent back to her home, together with all the members of her household who had been arrested with her.

# CHAPTER XXIV

#### ANOTHER LOVE LETTER

T can readily be imagined that Greive was furious at the continued failure of his cherished plans; but he was not

the man to let his victim go.

He issued a libellous pamphlet, rare enough in these days, entitled, "L'Egalité Controuvée, or history of the protection, containing the documents relative to the arrest of Madame du Barry, to serve as an example to the too ardent patriots who wish to save the Republic, and to the moderates who are so well agreed together to destroy

In this libel, freely circulated by his confederates, Greive said:-

"If the patriots of Luciennes seemed to attach importance to this woman in the address they made to the National Convention, this excessive celebrity is only due to the intervention, as singular as it is improper, of certain administrators in the district, to the unwonted energy with which one of them flew in the direction of Madame la Comtesse in order to ward off the blows which threatened her almost sacred head.

# ANOTHER LOVE LETTER

"It was in order to put to the blush other administrators who might be tempted to put themselves between her and the execution of the law, that they were anxious to submit to the entire nation a small number of leading facts to prove that the suspicions of aristocracy and anti-civicism falling upon her, if not known unfortunately to the administrators of Versailles, are, at any rate, of extreme notoriety in the regions where she lives.

"It is in order to calm the difficult consciences of the worshippers of great names that the sansculottes of Luciennes are desirous to declare that in taking the measure they did, their only aim was the safety of the country, and that in asking for the application of the decree of the 2nd June, for the Department of Seine-et-Oise, far from having any personal feeling, they bore no private ill-will towards the ex-dispenser of court graces and favours but looked with the same eye upon her chambermaid, with the difference of income of nearly fifty thousand crowns, and that they displayed the same republican firmness in executing the law upon Gouy, her doorkeeper, Morin, her political gobetween with the constituted authorities, and Devray, the surgeon."

The addresses that had been presented to the Convention were reproduced in the pamphlet, together with a copy of President Thuriot's reply, while there was also included a sort of history of Madame du Barry's most private life.

Fortunately, the Comtesse had a friend in one of the members of the Luciennes Club,

who regularly sent her reports of her enemies' movements, and he procured for her a copy of this pamphlet. Amazed at the extremely intimate nature of the detailed information in Greive's possession—details which could only have been furnished by a member of her own household, Madame's distrust was aroused, and, almost instinctively, without the slightest hesitation, her suspicions fell upon the negro Zamore, who alone of all her servants had not been arrested and taken to Versailles. Instantly, she felt intuitively that it was he who had betrayed her into the hands of her enemies.

The Comtesse lost no time, therefore, in ridding her household of this traitor—this spy under the thumb of the Revolution; she drove him out at once, devoutly hoping that she had looked her last upon the ungrateful wretch who for twenty years had led, thanks to her generosity, a life of luxury and ease. But Zamore was destined to make one more appearance in the life of the Comtesse du Barry—in the Revolutionary tribunal.

Upon leaving the château, Zamore immediately sought his confederates Greive, Blache and Salenave; to whom he related all

that had occurred.

Greive, never losing sight of his purpose, continued to denounce the Comtesse du Barry in the most scathing terms. She,

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poor lady, feeling her position becoming more and more unbearable, sent the following pathetic letter to the citizen administrators:—

"The Citizen du Barry to the Citizen Administrators of the Department of Versailles.

"Until now, citizens, my enemies have made futile attempts to disturb my tranquillity; I calmed myself by the thought of your justice, sought comfort in the reassurances of my own conscience; convinced that in these I had a sure defence against their malevolence. They conceived many plans for tormenting me, but they were powerless against me, because my cause was well-known to you.

"So long as there was no evidence that your authority would be over-ridden, I should not have thought of troubling you with my personal affairs; but now things have come to such a pass, my tormentors have become so insistent in their persecution of me, that my position is most perilous.

"I am in the gravest danger, and I beg you, in the name of humanity, to send someone quickly

to my assistance.

"I shall not waste your time by attempting to relate here, in detail, my causes for alarm, but will tell all to whomsoever you see fit to send to my aid."

On receipt of this letter, M. Lavalerie was commissioned to go to Luciennes and receive Madame du Barry's declaration, and, after a long consultation, he advised her earnestly to leave Luciennes, and to take

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refuge near Versailles, where she would be under the immediate protection of the

Department.

Madame du Barry confided to him that all her wealth, consisting of money, jewellery and plate, was hidden in different parts of the house, and that the members of the Luciennes Club were well aware of this, having received their information from Zamore and Salenave; that her departure would leave Luciennes at the mercy of the band's cupidity, and exposed to the raids of the municipal officers and National Guard.

This solicitude for the safety of her hidden wealth was not the only reason, however, which made Madame du Barry loth to leave her beloved château at this time, and, from the following letter, it would seem that even the much-lamented Duc de Brissac had

a successor :--

# "Saturday, 7th September 1793.

"I send you, my dear and affectionate friend, the picture that you wished for, sad and funereal present,\* but I feel as much as you yourself that you ought to desire it. In such a situation as ours, with so many subjects of pain and grief, it is food for our melancholy that we seek, and which becomes us beyond everything.

"I have sent to fetch the three portraits of you which were at his house: they are here. I have

<sup>\*</sup> A portrait of the Duc de Brissac.

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kept one of the small ones; it is the original of that in which you are wearing a white peignoir and a hat with a plume. The second is a copy of that in which the head is finished, but where the attire is only traced out; neither of them are framed.

"The large one, by Madame le Brun, is delicious; it is a speaking portrait, and infinitely pleasing; but, indeed, I should have thought myself too indiscreet in selecting it, and the one I am keeping is so pleasing, so excellent a likeness, and so piquant, that I am extremely content with it, and transported with happiness at possessing it. The one begun by Letellier is only sketched out, and the head is scarcely anything but a rough draft, which may become a good likeness. I have had it sent back to the painter.

"With regard to your large portrait, and the one which I am keeping, tell me, dear friend, if you wish me to send them to you, or if I ought to have them taken back to where they came from; in short, what destination you intend for them. desire nothing more than to have one which I may carry with me, and which may never leave me.

"Come then, dear love, to pass some sweet days here; come and dine with me, with whomever you may choose; come and procure me a few moments of happiness; I have none save with you; let me have an answer to all my questions; come to see a poor mortal who loves you beyond all and above all, until the last moment of his life.

"I kiss a thousand times the portrait of the most charming woman in the world, the woman whose heart, so good and so noble, merits an eternal devotion."

Though unsigned, the foregoing letter is

generally believed to have been written by the Duc de Rohan-Chabot, a young nobleman, nearly twenty years Madame du Barry's junior, to whom, a few months previously, she had advanced a large sum of money, an act which she and her unfortunate bankers, the Vandenyvers, had subsequently good cause to rue.

# CHAPTER XXV

#### MADAME DU BARRY DENOUNCED

FEW days, however, after refusing to follow Lavalerie's advice, Madame du Barry became sufficiently alarmed to alter her decision, and was preparing to fly to Versailles; but Lavalerie's call at the château had not passed unnoticed by the ever - watchful Greive, and, on the day following his visit, the Luciennes Club decided to send a deputation to Versailles to denounce Madame du Barry beforehand to the Revolutionary Committee of the Commune.

At the same time, it was arranged that Blache, in his capacity of agent to the Committee of General Safety, should denounce her anew in Paris to that committee, whose members had just been renewed. The new committee included Vadier, "that odious mixture of pride, barbarity, and cowardice," as Louis Blanc designates him, and Amar, who had voted for the execution of Louis XVI, sans appel ni sursis.

The deputation from Luciennes arrived in

due course at Versailles and arranged with the Revolutionary Committee of the town that a petition should be presented to the Committee of General Safety asking for an extension of powers in order to prevent the department from interfering with the arrest of Madame du Barry.

It was further arranged that three members of the department should be denounced, amongst their number being Lavalerie, the avowed protector of Madame du Barry.

Another petition was drawn up by Greive, signed by the members of the Versailles Committee, and presented to the Committee

of General Safety.

This time, Greive's efforts were crowned with success. The Committee of General Safety authorised the Versailles Committee to act solely for the public welfare; to employ all its powers to that end, and in no wise to interfere with the execution of the said decrees.

Thus far triumphant, Greive at once proceeded to obtain an account of the sums paid on Madame du Barry's account by Beaujon, the Court banker, and drawn up by Montvallier, Madame du Barry's intendant, an account amounting to six millions, and, armed with this document, and the decree of the Committee of General Safety, he worried the members of the Committee of

### MADAME DU BARRY DENOUNCED

Versailles until he attained his object; and at last the following document was placed in his hands:—

### "WARRANT FOR ARREST.

"Committee of General Safety.
"Sitting September 21st, 1793

"The Committee decrees that the woman named du Barry, residing at Luciennes, shall be arrested and conducted to the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, to be there detained, as a measure of general security, as a person suspected of anti-civicism and aristocracy. The seals shall be placed on her effects, and perquisition made of her papers. Those which appear suspicious shall be brought to the Committee of General Safety. The Committee delegates the citizen Greive to execute the present decree, and authorises him to requisition such civil officers of justice as he may find; armed force if need be. Moreover, the citizen Greive will cause to be arrested and conducted to Paris, to be confined as a measure of general security in the prison of La Force, all persons found at the house of the said du Barry at Luciennes at the moment of the execution of the present decree.

"Signed, Boucher Saint-Sauveur, Amer, Vadier, Panis."

On the following day, the 22nd September, Greive repaired to Luciennes, accompanied by the mayor—who himself, poor man, must have felt somewhat uneasy, as he had been one of those who had signed the pro-du

Barry petition of the previous summer—the justice of the peace, several municipal officers, and two gendarmes; exhibited the fatal warrant to the unfortunate mistress of the château; commanded the justice of the peace to place the seals upon the door of her house, and ordered Madame du Barry to enter a

public carriage with the gendarmes.

During the journey, as they were passing the hydraulic machine at Marly, they observed a cabriolet approaching, the occupant of which proved to be the Chevalier d'Escourt, who at that moment was actually on his way to pay Madame du Barry a visit. Although Greive's warrant gave him no authority to arrest any save the mistress of the château and those found on her premises at the time of her arrest, he took it upon himself to order the gendarmes to take the Chevalier prisoner, subsequently declaring that he had found him "at the du Barry's door," at the moment when she herself was apprehended.

He then removed Madame to the cabriolet, took the reins, and drove for the rest of the way the woman whose life was in his

hands.

It would be interesting to know what passed between the two during that fatal journey. Did Greive want to sell Madame du Barry her life? Did he propose a ransom to her? And if so, what ransom? If he

# MADAME DU BARRY DENOUNCED

did, the price was one she declined to pay, for Greive never turned aside from his fell purpose until the guillotine had claimed his

unhappy victim.

Madame du Barry was confined provisionally in the house of detention at Sainte-Pélagie, where she found herself in the company of many of her own sex: the celebrated Madame Roland, who had been there since the 2nd of September; the wives of two other Girondin leaders, Mesdames Brissot and Pétion; Mesdames de Crequy-Montmorency and de Gouy; the Mesdemoiselles de Moncrif and several actresses of the old *Théâtre Français*, now become the *Théâtre de la Nation*, among them Mademoiselle Raucourt, to whom, in the days when her slightest wish was fulfilled by her royal lover, she had been allowed to present a magnificent and exceedingly costly robe.

Although she could not fail to admire the calm fortitude with which the Girondin ladies bore the discomforts of their imprisonment, Madame du Barry was unable to follow their example, and to philosophi-

cally resign herself to her fate.

Ignorant of the fact that an order had also been issued for the arrest of Lavalerie, the one member of the Committee of General Safety who had been her friend; relying upon his aid, she despatched, on the 2nd

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October, a letter to the Administration of Seine-et-Oise, complaining of the unjust treatment she had received at the hands of the committee, who, a few weeks after admitting her to be innocent of the charges brought against her, had ordered her arrest. She pointed out that, had she so desired, she could very easily have taken away with her to England the most valuable part of her property, and that the mere fact that she had refrained from taking this step was sufficient proof of her attachment to her country. She concluded her letter with a request that Greive should not be allowed to ransack her house.

On the very day that this letter was written, the body of her protector, Lavalerie, was found floating in the Seine, above Paris.

It has been asserted that he was so madly in love with Madame du Barry that he drowned himself immediately after the news of her arrest was brought to him; but it is just as probable that he chose to take his own life rather than face the ignominy of a public execution. At all events, the fact remains that it was his devotion to the lady of the château at Luciennes which cost him his life

# CHAPTER XXVI

#### COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

N the midst of Madame du Barry's despair, a ray of light flashed across her dark horizon. She could not, would not believe that eventually she would be condemned to death, feeling sure that the authorities would be satisfied with the confiscation of her property; and she was confirmed in this eagerly-cherished idea by a singular paragraph which appeared in many of the journals, reporting "that Madame du Barry had been set at liberty and her property confiscated for the benefit of the nation."

Alas! It afterwards transpired that this cruelly false announcement had been inserted by Madame du Barry's relentless enemies, on learning that she spent most of

her time in reading the journals.

Meanwhile Salenave, who had been dismissed from Madame's service for dishonesty, had been appointed a member of the Revolutionary Committee of Versailles. Greive approached his confederate, and their united efforts resulted in their being author-

ised to remove the seals which had been placed upon the château at Luciennes. This done, they appointed two custodians (one of whom was Zamore), and a guard of six "patriots," to watch over the property.

Madame du Barry's letter had by this

Madame du Barry's letter had by this time reached the Administration of Seineet-Oise, but, naturally, it was without

effect.

Finding, therefore, that she dare not now hope for any support from the department, Madame du Barry appealed directly to the Committee of General Safety, an appeal in which she was seconded by her friends at Luciennes, who drew up another petition, praying for the release of their benefactress. Alarmed by this display of affectionate loyalty on the part of the inhabitants of Luciennes, and uneasy as to the result of their petition, Greive sought out a member of the committee named Héron, in whom he found an old enemy of Madame's bankers, the Vandenyvers. He had not much difficulty, therefore, in persuading Héron to denounce the unfortunate bankers - who were to involve Madame du Barry in their death - to his fellow-members, and their arrest was speedily effected.

While Héron was busying himself in drawing up a report against the Vandenyvers, Greive, having received permission to make

# COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

investigations at Luciennes, was going through all the letters and papers he could lay hands on, with a view to compromising Madame du Barry as much as possible.

On every communication he places his own malicious construction. "He forces the letters to say what they do not say, he connects certain passages with events with which they have no connection. He imagines, he supposes, he lies, he tortures phrases and words, in short, to extract from them a culpability necessary for the furtherance of his schemes and his hatred."

For instance, on a note in which mention is made of the Abbé Billiardi, he remarks:—

"This Abbé Billiardi was one of her most frequent visitors since the Revolution, as was also the Abbé de Fontenille, ex-vicar of Agen, guillotined the other day in Paris. Billiardi is dead. These Abbés were inseparable friends, and Billiardi was also an anti-Revolutionist. Behold the friends of the du Barry!"

And again, on an ordinarily friendly note from one of her English admirers, Lord Hawkesbury:—

"Letter which proves her intrigues with the courtiers of George III. Lord Hawkesbury is the privy councillor of the tyrant, who governs Pitt himself, and who, for twenty years, has really held the reins of government, although now and

again apparently in disgrace; his son is to-day the great political courier between London and the allied Powers in the Netherlands."

On a letter in which the Duc de Rohan-Chabot refers to the loan of 200,000 livres Madame du Barry had made him, he suggests that the money was destined to be used in subsidising the insurgents in La Vendée, where the Duke's estates were.

In regard to a memorandum of the expenses incurred by Madame du Barry during her stay in London, in November, 1792, he wonders if the money were not given to emigrés.

He also collected, with the ready assistance of Salenave and Zamore, all the jewellery, cash and securities he could discover, and

made a detailed inventory of them. Héron was then instructed to approach the Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, and the money received by Madame du Barry from the Vandenyvers was the great

basis of his accusation against her.

In her subsequent examination, which took place secretly after the presentation of Héron's report, Madame du Barry did not attempt to conceal the fact that she had influenced Louis XV with regard to the nominations he had made; she further admitted that she had obtained pensions and gratuities for her numerous protégés.

### COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

declared she was unable to estimate the total value of her property, but she valued her stolen diamonds at nearly 150,000 livres, and these formed only a part of those she possessed; she acknowledged that she owed to the generosity of Louis XV an income of 90,000 livres, derived from bonds on the Hôtel de Ville.

Next took place the examination of the bankers—the Vandenyvers, who were jointly accused, with Madame du Barry, as to their complicity in a *Plot for the General Bankruptcy of France and Spain*, a ridiculous fabrication which had been penned by Marat.

Madame du Barry was now transferred from Sainte-Pélagie to the *Palais de Justice*, where she was subjected to further interrogation by the brutal Dumas—Robespierre's henchman—vice-president of the public prosecutor, and the clerk of the court. After asking her a great many questions as to the sums she had squandered during her reign at the Court of Louis XV, and as to the extent of her influence over that monarch, he declared that she had "conspired against the republic."

For the time being, Madame du Barry contented herself with a simple denial of the charge, but, on being taken back to Sainte-Pélagie, she addressed a letter to Fouquier-Tinville, formally denying the

charges brought against her, and appealing to his sense of justice.

Had poor Madame du Barry been better acquainted with the character of this man, however, she would have been aware that she

need expect no mercy at his hands.

Fouquier-Tinville was a native of Picardy, and his name eventually came to be dreaded throughout France as much as that of Robespierre. He had the most extraordinary, almost inconceivable qualities; in his eyes justice would seem to have consisted in wholesale condemnation. If an acquittal was rendered absolutely necessary, it was a source of great vexation to this man, who literally thirsted for blood. His sole pleasure in life, by his own confession, consisted in witnessing the death-agonies of the unfortunate victims whom he had sent to the scaffold. No other species of recreation appealed to him; to the charms of women, to the pleasures of the table, he was alike indifferent.

It is a matter for little or no surprise, therefore, that this man, on receipt of Madame du Barry's pathetic letter, threw the communication unread into a portfolio where he kept his more unimportant papers, and hurried on the trial.

Madame du Barry was transferred from Sainte-Pélagie to the Conciergerie, the thres-

# COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

hold of the scaffold, where she occupied the room of Marie Antoinette. Even in her last hours, in the fatal order of things, she was destined "to usurp the place and bed of a queen!"

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# CHAPTER XXVII

#### THE TRIAL

T nine o'clock on the morning of the 6th of December (the 13th Frimaire, year II of the Republic), Madame du Barry and the three Vandenyvers were brought before the Revolutionary Court.

Although no verbatim report of this famous—or rather infamous!—trial has been handed down to posterity, much interesting information may be culled from the numerous notes jotted down by Fouquier-Tinville (who wrote with extraordinary

rapidity), during the proceedings.

The tribunal was composed of the citizens Réné François Dumas, vice-president, acting as president, François-Joseph Denisot, Alexandre Edme David, Charles Bravet, judges; Antoine Quentin Fouquier, public prosecutor; Robert Wolf, clerk of the Court.

On the bench of the jurymen sat the citizens Trinchard, Prieur, Billion, Mercier,

#### THE TRIAL

Klispis, Meyer, Martin, Topino-Lebrun, Lohier, Sambat, Vilatte, Payan.

After the tribunal and jurymen had duly taken their places, Madame du Barry was brought forward, together with the Van-denyvers and the citizens Chauveau and Lafeutre, men of the law and official defenders.

Madame du Barry was placed in an arm-chair, and, being the principal party accused, was the first to be examined by the president, who inquired her name, age, profession,

birthplace, and residence.

To these interrogations Madame du Barry replied that her name was Jeanne Vaubernier; that she was forty-two years old, born at Vaucouleurs, living on her means, residing, generally, at Luciennes. To the president's inquiry as to whether she was not the wife of the ci-devant Comte du Barry, she replied that she had been legally separated from him.

The Vandenyvers then underwent a similar examination, and the elder Vandenyver-an old man of sixty-six-and his two sons, gave in their turn their names, their professions,

and place of residence.

These preliminaries accomplished, the President then demanded the attention of the accused, the indictment was read by the Clerk of the Court, and Fouquier rose to open the attack.

He began with a résumé of the steps which had been taken against the accused; how that by a consultation of the Committee of General Safety and Surveillance of the National Convention of the 29th day of Brumaire last, Jeanne Vaubernier—the woman du Barry-Jean Baptiste Vandenyver, Edme Jean Vandenyver and Antoine Augustin Vandenyver had been summoned before the Revolutionary tribunal; how the said Vandenyvers, father and sons, had been made prisoners in the house of detention at La Force; how the documents concerning the accused persons had been handed to the public prosecutor on the 30th day of Brumaire, and the accused had been examined on the 2nd, 4th and 7th Frimaire following, by one of the judges of the tribunal. These details were followed up by a piquant account of her life at the Court of Louis XV. Fouquier then declared that, after the examination of her various papers, this "Aspasia of the French Sardanapalus" had been, ever since the memorable victory of the French people, the instrument and accomplice of the emigrés, the maintenance and support of the ci-devant grandees still living in France, and he mentioned the unfortunate Abbé de la Roche-Fontenille, ci-devant grand-vicar of Agen, condemned by the Revolutionary tribunal, as having found a refuge with her. Moreover,

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### THE TRIAL

in her desire to be as useful as possible to the emigrés, she had even invented a robbery of diamonds on the night of the 10th and 11th January, 1791; this pretended robbery, Fouquier maintained, was a comedy concocted with the aid of the English agent, Forth, in order to form relations with all the anti-Revolutionary agents to be found in London.

When Fouquier said this, he, of course, lied deliberately, as he had before him all the proofs of the robbery, and, in particular, a deposition of the spy Blache, in which he admitted that he had seen the stolen jewels at the Lord Mayor's Court in London, no doubt when Rouen was identifying them. This fact, needless to say, was not disclosed at the trial.

During her four visits to London, Fouquier continued, she had lived only with emigrés and English aristocrats hostile to the Revolution, particularly with "the infamous Pitt, that implacable enemy of the human race, from whom she had brought back a medallion, bearing the monster's effigy."

He declared that her purse was at the disposal of all the rebels in France; that she had advanced the sum of 200,000 livres to Rohan-Chabot, the owner of considerable estates in La Vendée, where, remarked

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Fouquier, "the first nucleus of rebellion was formed."

It would perhaps be as well to mention here that, as a matter of fact, this loan to the Duke of Rohan-Chabot was a duly-executed mortgage on the duke's estates in Brittany, bearing interest at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and that the Court actually had the deed in its possession.

Court actually had the deed in its possession.

Further, through the intervention of the Chevalier d'Escourt, she had lent a like sum to La Rochefoucauld, formerly Bishop of Rouen; finally, this same d'Escourt, his nephew Labondie, and the ci-devant Vicomte de Jumilhac, emigré, had received considerable sums from her.

He intimated that she had called together assemblies in her pavilion of Luciennes, "of which she wished to make a little stronghold, a fact sufficiently proved by the discovery of the eight guns in the château, which her friend the infamous d'Angremont fraudulently obtained for her from the municipality of Paris."

He referred to the vast treasure that had been hidden by her, which alone proved her faith in the success of the counter-revolution; he spoke of the rare collection of anti-revolutionary documents and engravings that had been found by Greive and his confederates; he spoke of the mourning she had worn publicly during her visits to England,

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### THE TRIAL

at the time of the tyrant's death (as a matter of fact, she was in mourning for the Duc de Brissac); he spoke of her frequent correspondence with the bitterest enemies of the Republic, citing, in particular, the names of the Crussols, the de Poix, Canonet, Calonne, d'Aiguillon, Neauveau, Chavigny, Montemart, Brissac, Frondeville, Coigny, Brancas, de Nesle, la Vaupaliere, Durfort, Maus-

sabre, Breteuil, Boissaison, Narbonne.

Passing next to the Vandenyvers, Fouquier-Tinville pronounced them to be intermediaries between Madame du Barry and the Emigration. He accused them of having transferred Madame du Barry's diamonds to Holland, of having, within the space of two years, furnished her with wildly extravagant sums, including a letter of credit of six thousand pounds sterling, another for two thousand, a third for fifty thousand, another for an indefinite sum; of having supplied her with the 200,000 livres for Rohan-Chabot and the same sum for La Rochefoucauld, and with having furnished all these sums while knowing full well the purpose for which they were required—for the aid of the emigrés—which should have deterred them from complying with her request, and caused them to regard Madame du Barry also as an emigrée.

He further intimated that the Vandenyvers

had "always been enemies of France"; that they had been the accomplices, in 1782, of the tyrant and the King of Spain in a plot to render the two nations bankrupt, "engulf the public fortune and perpetuate the slavery of the French." Then, again harking back to the Revolution, he accused them of having been among the number of the "knights of the poignard," and of having taken part in "the massacre of the people."

The only foundation for this last charge, apparently, was a statement of Héron to the effect that the elder Vandenyver had fired at him with a gun during the disturbances which followed the storming of the Tuileries

on August 10th, 1792.

# CHAPTER XXVIII

#### THE WITNESSES

FTER the reading of Fouquier-Tinville's indictment, the witnesses were summoned. First came George Greive, aged forty-five years, who described himself as a man of letters, born

in Newcastle, England.

He declared that Madame du Barry had opposed the recruiting at Luciennes. gave an account of all the treasures she had hidden, and which had been discovered at Luciennes on the day of her arrest. He declared that he had found, among her papers, a letter from Forth, whose carefully-erased signature he had just managed to decipher, and whom she had frequently entertained during his sojourn in Paris; and stated finally that he was of the general opinion which prevailed at Luciennes, that the pretended diamond robbery was simply a ruse Madame du Barry, to enable her the more easily to enter into relations with the English Government.

Answering the questions which the Pre-

sident here interposed, Madame du Barry admitted that she had received Forth, and that she had returned to England when her case was finished in order to recover her jewels, and pay the costs. The witness then retorted that the woman du Barry had imposed upon the Convention, by asserting that her jewels, supposed to have been stolen, constituted her only security for her creditors; whereas, as a matter of fact, she was in receipt of an income of several thousands of livres from bonds upon the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, possessed 186 bonds of the City of Paris, worth from 700 to 800 francs, and gold and diamonds—the whole being a fortune that might be estimated at from ten to twelve millions.

The next witness was Xavier Audouin, attached to the Minister of War, who simply described the arrest of the Duc de Brissac's aide-de-camp, Maussabré, at Luciennes, after

the massacre of the 10th of August.

Then came Jean Baptiste Blache, Commissary of the Committee of General Safety of the National Convention; who deposed that he had seen the prisoner with Forth in England; that her intimacy had begun, in fact, on the very day after her arrival in England; that the prisoner had, moreover, lodged with a Frenchman named Grenier, who was in the service of the Duc d'Orleans;

### THE WITNESSES

that on her second visit the prisoner had lived on terms of intimacy with the woman Calonne; that on her third journey, she had helped the daughter of d'Aiguillon to emigrate, by disguising her as a chambermaid; that she had subsequently found a lodging in the same house as Saint-Phar, putative brother of d'Orléans, the ci-devant Princesse d'Henin, the ci-devant Duchesse de Montemart, de Brissac's daughter, Bertrand de Molleville and Breteuil.

He further deposed that, in the month of January, 1793, the prisoner, "with the utmost English pomp," had worn mourning for Capet, and that she had assisted at all the services celebrated in the chapels of Powers hostile to the republic; that she had admitted she carried on a correspondence with the emigres, remarking that it was only gossip which they wrote, nothing more than friendly inquiries; that she had petitioned for the release of Labondie, who had been arrested on suspicion; and, finally, that during the visits of Rohan-Rochefort to Luciennes, she had tolerated the use of the titles princess, countess, etc.

A further examination at this juncture resulted in Madame du Barry admitting that she had intervened in Labondie's favour. The president inquiring if she had not received various documents at the time of the

formation of the king's Garde Constitutionelle, and if, through her friend Brissac, she had not influenced the nominations, Madame du Barry replied that she had received certain reports relative to this matter, but that she herself had taken no part whatever in any nomination.

After Blache, Bernard d'Escourt was summoned, ex-captain of cavalry, aged sixty-eight years, and already detained at La Force. D'Escourt declared that he it was who had acted as regular intermediary; he it was who had been to fetch from the Vandenyvers the 200,000 livres for Rohan-Chabot, to whom he had afterwards handed the money.

After two or three questions as to the nature of the specie and the name of the place where the sum had been paid, Fouquier-Tinville again rose, and made the following speech:—

"Whereas the witness d'Escourt, in his deposition, has not ceased to be manifestly in contradiction with himself, from the which contradictions it results that the evidence of the said d'Escourt is false; that the aim of these prevarications is to veil the complicity which exists between himself and the accused and other accomplices in a criminal correspondence, the public prosecutor requires and commands that the president shall draw up a report of the contradictions, depositions, prevarications and false statements put forward by the said witness in his declaration, and that the said

### THE WITNESSES

d'Escourt shall be arrested and conducted to the house of the *Conciergerie*, instead of La Force, as being accused of perjury, and complicity in a criminal and anti-Revolutionary correspondence."

The decree was issued in conformity with Fouquier's demand. The head of the Chevalier d'Escourt was promised to the executioner, who, in accordance with the prevailing custom (in those days of rapidly-conducted trials and hastily - pronounced judgments) of executing a sentence twenty-four hours after it had been pronounced, would not have long to wait for it; and Dumas then proceeded to examine Vandenyver.

Vandenyver's reply and defence were that, in view of the fact that the French Government had granted Madame du Barry a passport, he had deemed himself to be perfectly within his rights in not regarding her as an *emigrée*, and in providing her with the sums of money for which she had applied

to him.

Other witnesses were summoned. The last to give evidence were Madame du Barry's former servants, who had been dismissed from her household for theft and patriotism, who had passed from her kitchens to the local Committee of Surveillance. All these denounced the woman towards whom they had no reason to feel aught save grati-

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tude; they brought such bitter personal animosity and malice to the trial (all such vileness was eagerly collected by the Terror), "rancours so vile, that only the justice of Revolution could touch them without soiling itself."

Salenave appeared, and furnished the names of those aristocrats who had been received by Madame du Barry at Luciennes. He complained of having been snubbed and ill-treated by the other servants of the household, merely because he had the courage of his convictions, and openly declared himself a patriot, and asserted that it was on account of his opinions, and on that account only, that he had been dismissed. Madame du Barry replied that she certainly had shown the witness the door, not for his opinions, but because of the daily disappearance of her china.

After Salenave came the negro, Zamore, "aged thirty-one years, born at Bengal, in India, and at present employed with the Committee of Public Safety of Versailles."

Zamore, after announcing that he had been with Madame du Barry since he was ten years old, testified that, on seeing his mistress abused in many of the patriot papers, he had endeavoured to persuade her to sacrifice a part of her fortune, so that she might retain the remainder, but his advice had been

### THE WITNESSES

ignored. Madame had continued to entertain the numerous aristocrats who were in the habit of visiting her, and applauded the checks to the armies of the Republic; continued to ignore the reiterated advice of Zamore, whom, deposed that worthy, she actually ordered to leave her house within three days, on hearing that he was the friend of the illustrious Greive, and that he had relations with the patriots, Blache, Salenave, and others.

"It is false that I received aristocrats," answered Madame du Barry, with the courage of contempt; "as to the advice that the witness pretends to have given me, I had none to receive from him. With regard to his dismissal, it occurred on account of his frequentation of the persons he has just mentioned."

Jean Thénot, another former servant of the accused, transformed into a schoolmaster at Luciennes under the new régime, deposed to having heard Madame du Barry remark, in regard to the murder of Foulon and Berthier, "that the people were a mass of wretches and criminals."

Then came a woman who for twenty-three years had filled the post of chambermaid to Madame du Barry, and she, in spite of this long term of service, did her share, without compunction, in betraying her mistress.

She gave evidence as to the relations of her mistress with certain emigrés in London.

Finally, the ninth witness, a sempstress at Luciennes, the widow Potet, deposed that Madame du Barry had spent the night in burning papers at the time of de Brissac's arrest.

# CHAPTER XXIX

#### THE VERDICT

N the 17th Frimaire, the same judges and jurymen took their seats again. The same prisoners were brought forward and fresh witnesses were heard, though they might have been those of the day before, for they had nothing new to relate, and simply recapitulated the evidence already collected. Devray, the surgeon of Luciennes, was heard. Fournier declared that, among the objects found at Luciennes, he had recognised many of the treasures which were supposed to have been included in Madame's stolen property. Madame's second waiting-maid made the same deposition as the widow Potet.

After these witnesses had withdrawn, the older Vandenyver was again subjected to an

examination.

The Vice-President, Dumas, then read Fouquier-Tinville's summing up. The effect it produced gives some idea of the mental capacity of the jurymen who could

be influenced by such rubbish. We reproduce it below:—

"CITIZEN JURYMEN,—You have judged the conspiracy of the wife of the last tyrant of the French, you have at this moment to judge the plots of the courtesan of his infamous predecessor.

"You have to decide if this Messalina—born amongst the people, enriched by the spoils of the people, and who, by the death of the tyrant, fell from the rank in which crime alone had placed her—has conspired against the liberty and sovereignty of the people: if, after being the accomplice and the instrument of the libertinage of kings, she has become the agent of the conspiracies of tyrants, nobles and priests, against the French Republic. You know what light the evidence of the different witnesses and the documents discovered has thrown upon these plots. . . . It is for you in your wisdom to weigh the evidence.

"You see that royalists, federalists, all these factions, though divided amongst themselves in appearance, have all the same centre, the same

object and aim.

"The war, abroad or in La Vendée, the troubles in the south, the insurrection in Calvados, . . . all march under the orders of Pitt, but now the veil which covered so much wickedness has been rent in twain, and nothing remains to the conspirators but shame, and the punishment of their infamous projects.

"Yes, Frenchmen, we swear that the traitors shall perish, and liberty alone shall endure. . . In striking with the sword of the law this conspiratrice, this Messalina, guilty of plotting against the country, you not only avenge the Republic,

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but you uproot a public scandal, and you strengthen the rule of that morality which is the chief base of the liberty of the people."

The charges against Madame du Barry, as stated in the summing-up, were that she was :---

> 1. Accused of conspiring against the French Republic, and of having favoured its enemies by procuring for them exorbitant sums in her journeys to England, where she herself emigrated.

2. Living habitually with Pitt, whose effigy she wore on a silver medal.

3. Wearing, in London, mourning for

the late king.

4. Having caused to be buried at Luciennes the letters of nobility of an emigré, also the busts of the former Court.

5. Of having wasted the treasures of the state by her extravagance when she lived with Louis XV.

After the summing-up, Dumas put the question to the jury. The accused withdrew.

They deliberated over the evidence an hour and a quarter, and the death of Madame du Barry "cost the conscience of the Terror a quarter of an hour longer than the death of Marie Antoinette."

At the end of this time the jury returned, and the prisoners were once more summoned and heard.

"The tribunal, after the declaration of the judge, read aloud to wit: That it is certain that machinations have been carried on and understandings arrived at with the enemies of the State and their agents in order to induce them to commit acts of hostility, to point out and favour the means of undertaking them and of working against France, notably, by making journeys abroad, under arranged pretexts, in order to concoct hostile plans with her enemies, and furnish them or their agents with monetary assistance.

"That Jeanne Vaubernier, the woman du Barry, residing at Luciennes, ci-devant courtesan, is convicted of being one of the authors or accomplices of these machinations and understandings.

"Having heard the Public Prosecutor in his arguments upon the application of the law, condemns the said Jeanne Vaubernier, the woman du Barry, the said Jean Baptiste Vandenyver, Edme Jean Baptiste Vandenyver, and Antoine Augustin Vandenyver to the penalty of death, conformably with the first article of the first section of the first title of the second part of the penal code. . . .

"Declares the property of the said woman du Barry, Jean Baptiste, Edme Jean Baptiste, and Antoine Augustin Vandenyver confiscated for the benefit of the Republic, conformably with Article II of Title II of the law of the 10th March, 1793. . . .

"Orders the diligence of the Public Prosecutor to see that the present judgment is executed

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within twenty-four hours in the *Place de la Revolu*tion of this city, and the same printed and posted throughout the whole of the Republic."

Terror-stricken, overwhelmed with horror, Madame du Barry heard almost as in a dream the sentence of death. Overcome with grief, she was quite unable to rise; two gendarmes were obliged to carry her from the bench, and the public began to fear that she would not have the strength to go to her death alive.

When she at last realised that all was over, that she was going to be taken away, she lost all self-control, the last remnant of dignity deserted her, and in her extremity, in her mortal fear of death, the white lips of her who had so loved her life framed the words with which she hoped to purchase it. Pale from her night of terror, we see her flinging herself, trembling with fear, between the two gratings of the *Conciergerie*, confessing to the whereabouts of all that she had stowed away and hidden; all that she wished to save from the clutches of the Republic. To the Judge Denisot, and Claude Royer, substitute for the public prosecutor, she gives an inventory of all her treasures buried at Luciennes. Alas, that she should so have sacrificed her honour, for it availed her nothing, and betrayed into the hands of her enemies her faithful valet-de-chambre, Morin, who had

hidden much of her wealth in his own garden, and whose fidelity would now cost him his head; the woman Deliant, to whose care she had confided some of her jewels; and the citizen Montrouy, who had remained her friend through all her misfortunes, and who had actually had a bed sent to her when she was detained at Sainte-Pélagie.

# CHAPTER XXX

#### THE CONFESSION

E herewith reproduce the confession with which the woman who had hardly ever neglected an opportunity of showing mercy to others, vainly tried to purchase mercy for herself.

DECLARATION OF MADAME DU BARRY MADE BETWEEN TWO WICKETS AT THE CONCIERGERIE, AFTER THE JUDGMENT WHICH CONDEMNED HER TO THE PENALTY OF DEATH.

To-day, the 18th Frimaire, the second year of the French Republic one and indivisible, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, having been informed that Jeanne Vaubernier, the woman du Barry, had important declarations to make:

We, François-Joseph Denisot, judge of the Revolutionary Tribunal, assisted by Claude Royer, substitute for the public prosecutor at the said tribunal, and Jean Baptiste Tavernier, clerk of the court, repaired to the house of justice of the Conciergerie, where

we found the citizen Dange, administrator of the police, and the said Jeanne Vaubernier, the woman du Barry, who said to us:—

(1) That in the place where the gardening utensils are kept, in front of her ice-house at Luciennes, there are buried a golden necessary, consisting of a china basin, mounted in gold, a golden teapot, a kettle, a spirit-lamp, a milk-pot, a large chocolate-pot, another small coffee-pot, a porringer with a lid and its saucer, three small spoons, a small strainer, a hundred counters with her arms and the cypher "D.B."; the whole in gold and of the most precious workmanship; observing that the handles of the above are of red

jasper mounted in gold.

(2) In a box or basket buried in the same place, fifteen hundred and thirty-one louis d'or of twenty-four livres each; a chain of diamonds, with its two tassels and the key; two earrings, each composed of nine or ten stones, the front ones very large; three rings, one of white diamonds, one of rubies and white diamonds, one of emeralds and white diamonds; one very fine engraved stone, mounted with gold chains as a necklace; two coral necklaces, one of which is mounted in gold; one necklace of fine pearls; ear-chains also of fine pearls; a necklace of pearls in gold, and two or three gold chains for the neck; a portrait of Louis XV in a gold frame.

(3) In a small deal box, entrusted to the wife of one Deliant, floor-polisher, a watch adorned with diamonds; a small packet of fourteen to sixteen diamonds, each of from five to six grains; a packet of small rubies; two small flat diamonds to mount in rings; another portrait of Louis XV in a

#### THE CONFESSION

laboratory, mounted and framed in gold; a little child in the form of a savings-box, in gold and blue enamel; sixteen new half-guineas, and two guineas done up in paper; a pair of gold spurs, with monograms, belonging to the late M. de Brissac; a small cardboard box contained in the one mentioned above, in which is a chain of emeralds and diamonds, of which one large one weighs fifty grains; the tassels of the said chain are in the box described in the second article. Note that in the second or third article there is also a gold pencil ornamented with diamonds; a box, also entrusted to the woman Deliant, containing a golden mustard-pot, a small basin and two golden goblets, and several other articles which slip her memory; two cellarets filled with flasks of rock crystal, one of which belongs to her and the other to the late Brissac, the said flasks ornamented with gold; another crystal goblet with a gold top, belonging to the late Brissac; a small silver-gilt porringer with its saucer.

(4) A coffer of blue velvet garnished with silver, placed beneath a staircase, in a chamber forming a wardrobe, next to the one she occupied, in which coffer are a dozen gold plates with armorial bearings, four sugar spoons, two olive spoons, one punch spoon, all in gold; a case containing twelve golden coffee-spoons; several portraits of women; two gold seals, one for the desk and one small one; three medals, one representing the Pont de Neuilly, the second, the School of Surgery, and the third, the Mint; two other medals representing the wedding of some ci-devant princes, also in gold; one very large gold medal belonging to the late Brissac, and certain other effects which she cannot specify; further, two Turkish poignards set with rubies and other gems.

(5) In the room adjoining her bedroom, serving as a passage, in the chest of drawers, a pair of gold buckles, garnished with pearls; a small box of solid gold; a box of light tortoiseshell, mounted in gold, with the portrait of a nun; the stopper of a golden flask enamelled in blue, with a large diamond.

(6) In a chest of drawers, in the sleepingchamber, a water jug and its basin of rock crystal garnished with gold; two jasper goblets mounted in gold, an antique bracelet mounted in gold, composed of different stones; a goblet of rock crystal, and two jugs and the saucer, all mounted in gold; twenty-one or twenty-two rings of different engraved stones mounted in gold; a box mounted in a gold cage, with the portrait of Brissac's wife; a portrait of the daughter of the latter, mounted in gold; a portrait of the son of the same, also mounted in gold; another of his brother; a box in light tortoiseshell mounted in gold, with a very fine white stone, on which is cut the portrait of Brissac and of the deposer; a box of jasper, mounted in gold, enamelled; another box of mother-of-pearl mounted in gold; a portrait in enamel of Brissac's grandmother; two golden cups with coral handles, and certain other articles belonging to Brissac.

(7) In the cellar, in ordinary use, beneath the staircase, one large pail, nine dozen and seven plates, eighteen candlesticks, three of which have two branches, a dozen saucepans, a large and a small stewpan, all in silver; nineteen large silver clocks, sixty-four dishes, also of silver, and other silver articles of which the list is at her house.

(8) Several figures of different kinds in bronze. A part of them should be in one of the thickets near the pavilion, the whole slightly covered with earth.

#### THE CONFESSION

(9) In the garden of Morin, her valet-de-chambre, are eleven bags containing one thousand two hundred and forty double louis brought back from London on her last journey; a shell box mounted in gold, upon which is the portrait of Marie Antoinette, done by Sauvage, and in which there is a gold medal and certain other articles of which Morin is aware, it being he whom she had instructed to hide all the objects mentioned in the present article.

(10) Note that she has deposited with Morlan, A. Moncelet, Ransom and Company, bankers, all the articles having relation to the robbery, with the exception of those underlined in the margin and included in the printed reward offered for the discovery of the theft in general, which has been signed by her and us, as well as by the citizen

Dange.

(II) That she has entrusted to the citizen Montrouy a silver syringe, and three cannons, also of silver; a small folding rule of gold; a ring named atriodes; a portrait of Brissac; two powder knives, with golden blades, with two small circles of diamonds and black handles; a gold watch, and a small gold seal with an emerald; observing that she has received from the said Montrouy two hundred and fifty or three hundred livres as a loan, as well as the bedding which she has used during her detention until the present time.

The above declarations having been read over, she has said that they contain the truth, and that she has nothing else to declare; adding that if it is the good pleasure of the tribunal she will write to London and

without difficulty recover the objects taken in the robbery, herself paying the cost occasioned by the suit; and has signed with us, Denisot, judge; Royer, substitute for the public prosecutor; Jeanne Vaubernier du Barry; Dange, administrator of police; Tavernier, clerk of the court.

# CHAPTER XXXI

THE LAST HOUR

HOUGH her wealth went to enrich the Republic, the hand of the Revolution was not stayed, and the full rigour of the law was duly meted out to the poor woman who had made this last sacrifice in vain.

Madame du Barry had but to see the fatal vehicle which had come to convey her to the scaffold, when the self-control she had temporarily regained, once more vanished. With the finger of death thus beckoning her, every vestige of colour left her face, and so intense was her pallor that she was unrecognisable by those who a few months ago had been lost in admiration of her marvellous beauty.

As she entered the tumbril, she broke into sobs which she tried in vain to stifle; tears rained down her ashen cheeks. A huge crowd had congregated, perhaps more out of curiosity than hatred to witness the death of this courtesan of the ci-devant tyrant; and the Vandenyvers, conscious of the scrutiny of

the eager mob, endeavoured to inspire her with confidence, but even the brave bearing of her fellow-travellers could not affect her; she was powerless to follow their courageous example. She only answered their encouraging words with a blank, uncomprehending stare, when suddenly, near the Palais Royal, by the Barrière des Sergents, she raised her eyes, and beheld on the balcony of a milliner's shop, a crowd of work-girls who had gathered there to catch one last glimpse of her whose lot had once been their envy. The sight completely unnerved her; perhaps, as in a dream, her past life flashed before her tear-filled eyes; she remembered her youth; the happy, fast-fleeting days when she, too, had been thus . . . then Versailles . . . Luciennes . . . And from the dream she awoke to give vent to the most heartrending screams. The young girls, touched beyond measure by the awful cries, quickly withdrew; their curiosity, at all events, had been amply satisfied.

Meanwhile, the crowd was astonished at

this demonstration of fear.

They had become accustomed to seeing death, and to seeing it met with such splendid courage by men and women alike, that it seemed to strike them now, for the first time, that it was a fellow-being—a woman—they were going to kill. Some slight emotion

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# THE LAST HOUR

betrayed itself amongst the groups of men and women whose hearts had become hardened to these outrages, and, at the sight, the officer, fearing a public demonstration, ordered the pace to be quickened, whipped up the horses of the tumbril, and hurried on to the place of execution. They reached the scaffold at half-past four in the afternoon, and Madame du Barry was the first to ascend.

Once in the hands of the executioner, her reason forsook her, and, pointing to the scaffold, she cried in anguish: "For me—for me—"

Then, turning desperately to the executioner, she utters, in that sweetest of voices, whose pleading none had hitherto been able to resist, her last request. "Wait one moment, sir, I beg of you." But he is deaf to her words as the accursed guillotine itself, and . . . the knife descends.

Thus we have seen du Barry—the enchantress-in the glory of her voluptuous youth, revelling in luxury and love, and treading, all unwillingly, the tortuous paths of politics; later, dwelling in a lovely retreat and tasting the sweets of maturer affections, of true and reverent friendship, learning something of the nobler, if sadder side of life, before her own terminates upon the scaffold.

There is, says M. de Goncourt, in the Greek Anthology, an epitaph on a young girl, expressing the hope that the earth will not press too heavily upon her corpse, for she, when alive, was so light upon the earth. Certainly no more pathetically-appropriate sentiment could be uttered over the last resting-place of the beautiful, good-hearted, careless, unfortunate courtesan, Jeanne Gomart de Vaubernier, Comtesse du Barry.

THE END





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